

MANY GOLDEN AGES
RUINS · TEMPLES AND MONUMENTS OF THE ORIENT
BY FRANK MACSHANE

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MANY GOLDEN AGES

THIS UNUSUAL book is neither an archaeological text nor a chatty travel diary. It is, on the other hand, an attempt to provide clear and accurate descriptions of some of the world's great monuments, to assess their significance for the reader and the traveler, and to make a few philosophical observations about them and the people who built them. Through the perceptive eye of the author, with the assistance of striking photographs and well-drawn ground plans, the reader is invited to have a new look at ancient splendors ranging from the temples of Cambodia and India to the palaces of Persepolis and the tombs of Egypt.

Before author MacShane embarked on the round-the-world journey that took him to the sites of these temples and tombs, he discovered that there were no books that simply and clearly described these places for the discriminating traveler. There were, he found, only ecstatic travel-adventure books or scholarly archaeological treatises far too heavy to be carried on a plane trip. It was this discovery that led him to the writing of *Many Golden Ages*, a discerning record in which the descriptions are neither archaeologically technical nor, as he expresses it, "of the moonbeam sentimental sort."

Expertly guided by Mr. MacShane, the reader begins this journey into the past with a visit to the great temples of Borobudur and Prambanan in Java. From there, he is transported to Cambodia for a

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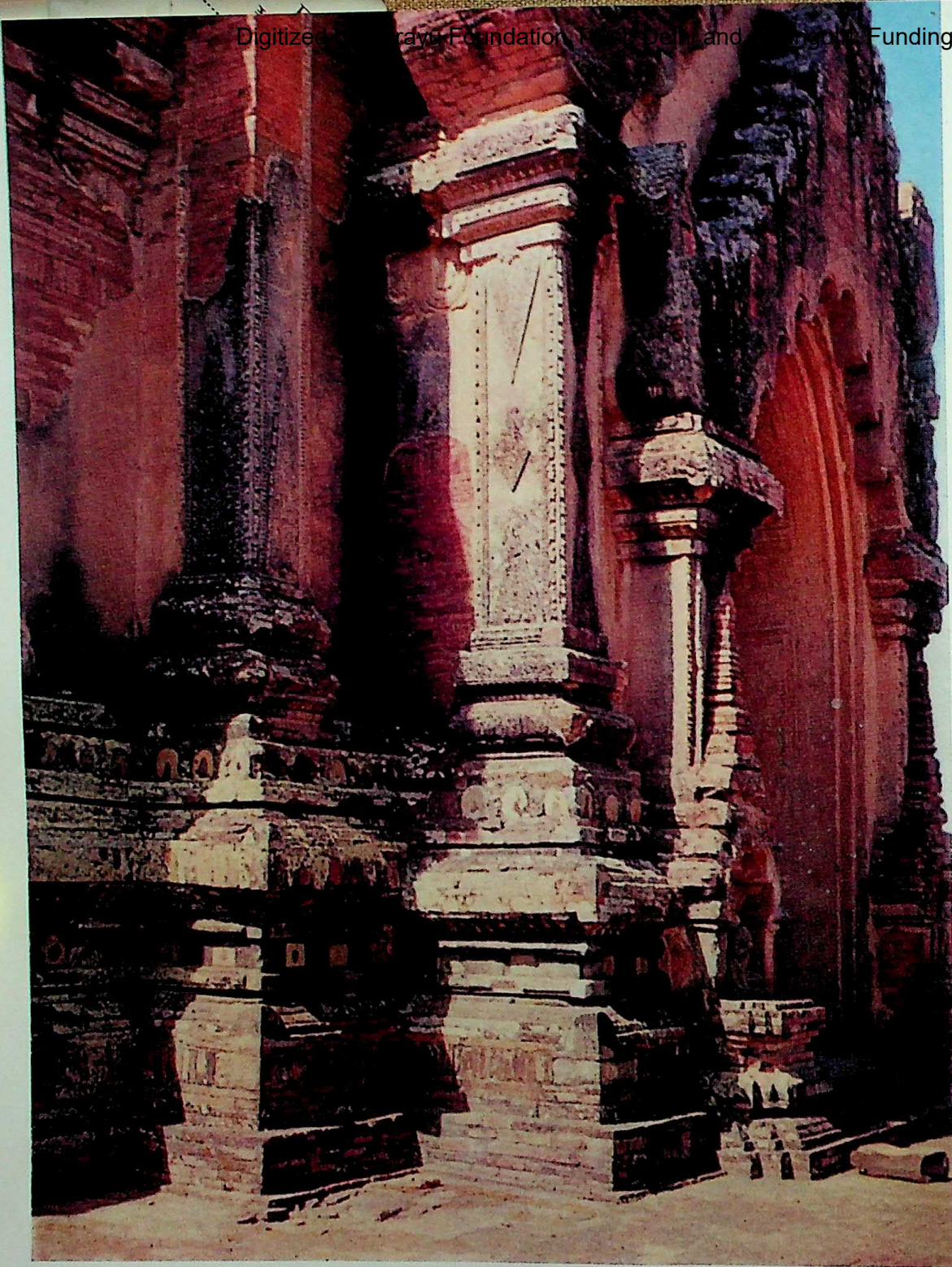
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MANY GOLDEN AGES





FRONTISPIECE: *Detail
of the Htilominlo
Temple, Pagan*

FRANK MACSHANE
MANY
GOLDEN AGES
RUINS · TEMPLES
& MONUMENTS
OF THE ORIENT



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PREFACE

THERE are three dangers which face anyone who chooses to write about ruins. If he is an earnest person with a social conscience, he is likely to be drawn into making over-obvious comparisons between past ages and the present. If he is of what is known as a "poetic" cast of mind, he is likely to lose coherence as he writes of the playing of moonbeams on deserted shrines. Finally, if he is a proper scholar, he risks losing the reader's interest as he falls into archaeological jargon.

While hoping to avoid all of these pitfalls, I want to perform in this book what is at once a more humble and a more ambitious task. In the first place, prior to my own voyage to the East, I searched in vain for books which gave an accurate and readable description of some of the world's most famous ruins and temples. Everything that I found was either sentimental or technical. I therefore hope that this book will provide readers with what they apparently cannot find elsewhere—not a guidebook, but merely a description of what these ruins and temples really look like. In the second place, feeling that such an undertaking would be of limited interest both to myself and to possible readers, I have also attempted to deal with the "significance" of these works of art. Before I set off on my trip, I was urged by other travelers not to miss seeing Angkor or the Taj Mahal or Persepolis. Naturally I accepted these exhortations without question, but since I have now seen these monuments, I think they have a greater importance than that of merely satisfying curiosity or even of providing an agreeable aesthetic experience. I have therefore tried to set down what I think this importance is—or, to put it differently, why one "must" see these places. The meaning of ruins is not easily found, nor is it easily stated. I hope, however, that it will emerge indirectly in the course of the book as much as it will in the final chapter.

I have considered the various temples and ruins in the same order in which I saw them, since on the whole they are not connected chronologically.

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PREFACE

There are many whose kindness and helpfulness were of great assistance to me in my travels. Of these I should particularly like to thank Mr. Patrick Kavanagh, formerly of Djakarta; Mr. and Mrs. Donald Weatherbee and Mr. Alexander Llewellyn of Djog-jakarta; the Tjokorde Agung of Ubud in Bali; Mr. and Mrs. John Cahill and Mr. Timothy Green of Bangkok; the officials of the Burma Oil Company in Rangoon and Chauk, especially Messrs. Maxwell-Lefroy, Lindsay, and U Saw Sive; the Director of the Institute of Culture in Bangkok; U Than Wain and Than Win of Mandalay; H. E. Miguel Serrano, the Chilean Ambassador in New Delhi; the Director of the Kashmiri Government Tourist Department in Srinagar; Father Moran and the Chini Lama in Kathmandu; and Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Connor of Massachusetts.

In addition there were many anonymous persons for whose kindness and thoughtfulness I am most grateful. Chief among these are the many Brahman priests who guided me through the temples in their charge, the many members of the Government of India Tourist Department, the lorry driver who brought me back to Hassan from Belur after the last bus had left, the government doctor who drove me from Polonnaruwa to Matale at a time of civil strife in the beautiful country of Ceylon, the policeman of Shiraz who showed me his city and helped me to visit Persepolis, and more especially all of the archaeologists, government and private, who have devoted their energies to the preservation of the great monuments which I visited.

For assistance in procuring illustrations, I am especially indebted to the Fogg Museum at Harvard, the Oriental Institute of Chicago, Mr. Eliot Elisofon, Mr. Charles Wilkinson of the Metropolitan Museum, Mr. George Montgomery of the Asia Society in New York, Mr. T. Amid of the Consulate General of Iran in San Francisco, Penguin Books Ltd., Miss Joyce Ruth, who prepared a number of the maps and drawings, and a number of private and governmental organizations representing the countries here dealt with.

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MANY GOLDEN AGES

ONE · BOROBUDUR AND PRAMBANAN

SINCE nature is less obtrusive than man, it is pleasant to visit ruins located in remote districts of the country. In Rome, the Forum suffers from the noisy distractions of the modern city, but in central Java, where there are only palm groves and rice fields the color of chartreuse, the great temple of Borobudur cannot be markedly different from what it was a thousand years ago when it was built. Then as now the rice fields must have been worked by peasants in straw hats while along the road women dressed in batik skirts tended their babies and young children rode the backs of the long-horned water buffalo.

The road to the temple runs through several small villages and encampments, and the eye is as much caught by the bustle of human activity as it is by the blue volcanic mountains that rise in the distance across the plain. At any rate, there is nothing to prepare one for the temple itself: the road merely turns a corner, mounts a slight incline, and stops. And there, beyond a clump of trees, stands the largest pagoda in the world, a huge mountain of gray stone covering an area of some 15,000 square yards. In a sense, the sudden arrival is suitable, for this massive pile has no need of a spectacular entrance. Rather it is enhanced by the modest approach and seems a natural part of these quiet surroundings.

From a distance, the temple looks like a mound of granite surmounted by innumerable short spires—something like a gigantic sea urchin—and it is almost impossible to discover its architectural form. As one approaches, however, it becomes evident that the temple is built in the shape of a pyramid, with five rectangular tiers at the bottom leading to circular terraces at the top which are in turn surmount-

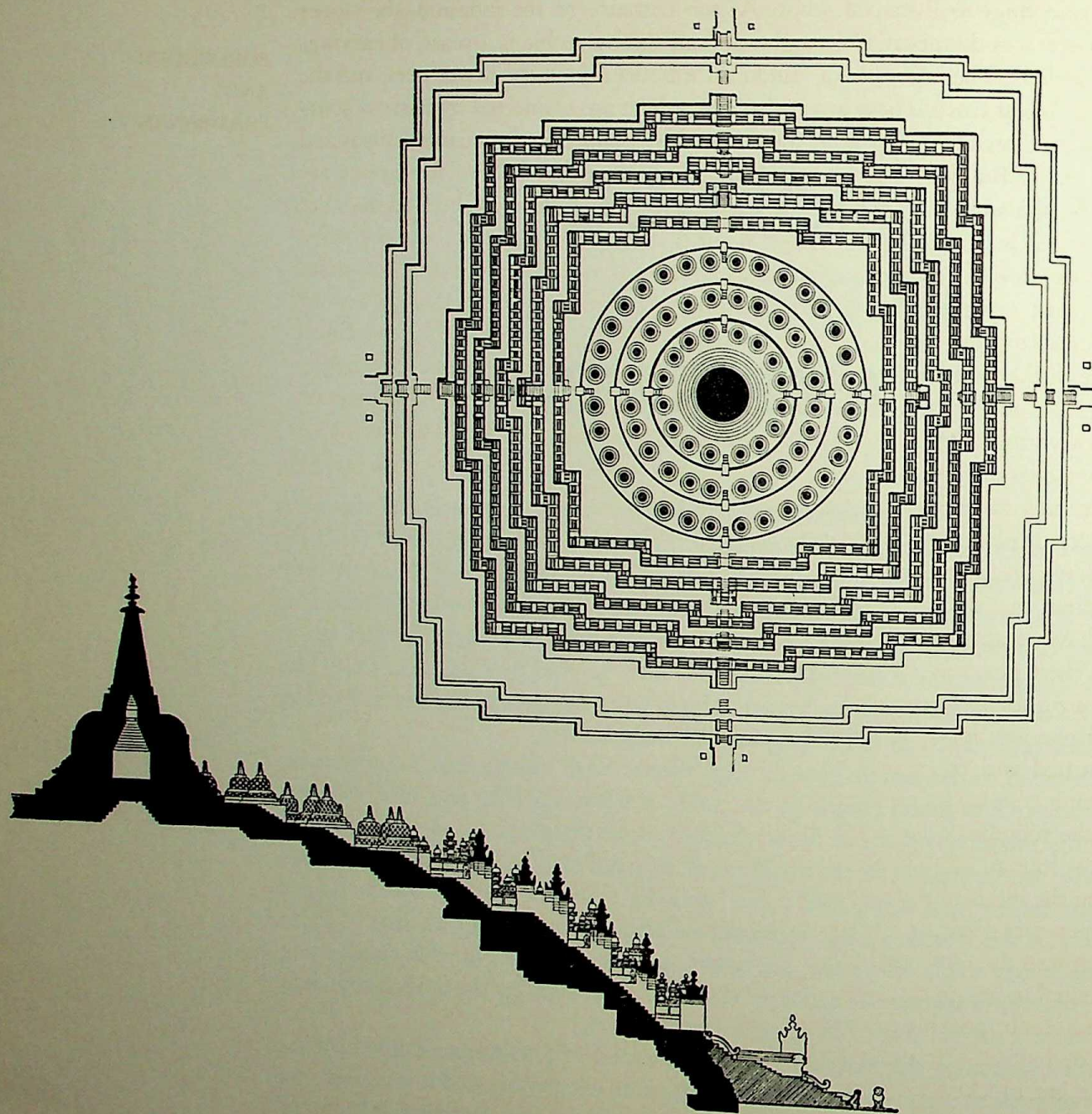


FIGURE I. Ground plan and cross section of Borobudur.
(Courtesy of Penguin Books Ltd.)

ed by one huge bell-shaped stupa. At the entrance to the pyramid, the upper circular terraces disappear from sight, and all that is visible is a maze of carvings and bas-reliefs. The influence of Hindu art is noticeable in the lower tiers, and the design is almost fussy. These lower terraces, which are connected by narrow staircases, are enclosed by steep walls surmounted by hundreds of miniature stupas and statues of the Buddha. The bas-reliefs that run along the walls of the terrace are joined, as in a frieze, and the various parts representing events of the Buddha's life are arranged in chronological order. Most of the scenes are static, and the story progresses slowly. For this reason, many of the characters are repeated, and there are frequent representations of the Buddha surrounded by his followers and of buxom dancing girls, called Apsaras, posing under trees while birds fly overhead. Because of the leisurely manner in which the Buddha's life is depicted, no detail is lacking, and all the scenes are realistic. He is first shown as a child with his parents; then as a young prince he is pictured surrounded by antelope, deer, and elephants. In these scenes of rustic life, nothing is omitted, and the thatch on a farmhouse roof is as carefully carved as the vegetables in the garden.

In certain places the foundations of the temple have sagged, and therefore the reliefs have weathered unevenly. Seen from a distance, Borobudur looks dark and forbidding, but on closer view, especially along the lowest gallery, where the bas-reliefs have escaped the rain, one can see that the original color of the sandstone was tan. In these portions, the details of the carvings are especially well preserved.

As one goes up from tier to tier, the elegance and the standard of workmanship in the bas-reliefs appear to improve. In the lower tiers the figures are plain and somewhat stilted and repetitive, but in the third or fourth, there are many panels containing trees and animals, and there is also a greater amount of abstract design. From the religious point of view, this combination reflects the paradox of one of the most human of all religions, which is also one of the most abstract. Accompanying the increasing elegance of the bas-reliefs is an increase in statuary, and on the upper tiers there are statues of dogs and lions, curiously Chinese in inspiration, which guard the four entrances.

Essential to an appreciation of the architectural plan of the temple is the realization that it is impossible from one of the rectangular terraces to see much of what is above or below. The palm trees are visible on the ground below, but the lower terraces are blocked from view by the outer parapet, and the stupas above are cunningly hidden by the overhang along the gallery walls. Thus, by being caught in the maze of bas-relief and statuary depicting the life of Buddha in his various incarnations, the visitor or pilgrim is caught in the particular, in the human ac-

tivities of the religion. But upon climbing to the sixth tier he enters what must be representative of the first stage of enlightenment, for now the square base changes to circular platforms around which are ranged bell-shaped stone stupas. These are hollow and are ventilated by small diamond-shaped windows so that their surface resembles coarse wickerwork, and inside of each of them sits a Buddha. It is a popular legend at Borobudur that a person who can reach through one of the interstices to touch the stone Buddha within will have his fondest wish granted.

The seventh platform is also circular, but as on a wedding cake, its circumference is smaller than the one below it. The eighth platform repeats the pattern and, like the others, has stupas placed around the edge. The holes in the uppermost stupas are not, however, diamond-shaped but square. The stone has been hewn so that the corners of the square blocks fit neatly into niches carved in neighboring blocks, leaving symmetrical spaces in between. Except for this variety, all seventy-two stupas are in the shape of a bell. They are 12 feet high, their bases are carved in a design of lotus leaves, and at the top of each a spire points towards the sky to represent the Buddha's umbrella.

At the very top of the pile sits the final, gigantic stupa. It is over 50 feet high and has a circumference of more than 50 yards. It is constructed in the same shape as the other stupas but is solid. From this highest terrace whole forests of palm trees are visible as well as the green rice fields that reach to the mountains. But what is more important is that all of the tiers of the temple below now come into view. This, as has been noted, was not true at lower levels. From this top level the architectural design of the temple as a whole and the principle of its construction are revealed. The problem the design presented to the architects was the combination of a circle with a square. Where the corners of this square occur, the stupas in the three circular platforms are in line; elsewhere they alternate like the seats in a theater, and between these two extremes the stupas are so placed that a gentle curve, like that of a bow, outlines their positions on the descending tiers. In this way geometrical rigidity is overcome.

Since the topmost stupa contains no statue of the Buddha, it has sometimes disappointed visitors who, expecting to find in it the finest and most beautiful statue of all, call it anticlimactic. They feel cheated because they thought they would find a sanctuary or holy of holies at the top. But those who have these misgivings have misunderstood the function of a stupa and have taken it to be the Buddhist equivalent of a Christian church or Hindu temple. In fact, however, as we know from similar structures in Ceylon and India, Buddhist stupas or pagodas were built not as houses of worship but as mounds for the preservation of relics of the Lord Bud-

dha. They have immense sanctity, but they were not put to the same use as temples and churches for the simple reason that they have no interiors. The Buddhists have temples containing large images of the Buddha that are used for worship and teaching, but these are usually placed around the outer edge of a stupa. Thus Borobudur was in no sense a parish church, but rather a sacred place to which pilgrims could go very much as they go to Sarnath in India or to Anuradhapura in Ceylon. The visitor who is disappointed in Borobudur is therefore expecting of it something that was never intended.

It is said that the word Borobudur means "monastery on a hill," but it is likely that the word referred to monasteries built close by it and subsidiary to it as at Anuradhapura. The presence of the nearby temple of Mendut, which is not a stupa but a chamber containing a statue of Buddha, and of the remains of other shrines in the neighborhood, also suggests that at one time Borobudur was a great center for pilgrimages. But what the faithful came to see was quite unlike any other Buddhist sanctuary anywhere in the world. So far as can be determined from the evidence in India, the Buddhists were the first temple and stupa builders. Their buildings developed from the early cave temples like those at Ajanta and Ellora. Later, the architectural forms of the Buddhists were adapted and were elaborately embellished by the Hindus. Examples of this stage in temple architecture may be seen at Mahabalipuram, near Madras, where one of the distinct features of the temples is the use of tiered roofs over the main shrine. As the art developed under Hindu auspices, these tiered roofs became elaborately decorated with carvings, statues, and spires. It is impossible to be sure about matters of this sort, but the pyramidal stupa at Borobudur is so similar in form to these Hindu roofs that it is possible it was inspired by them. The ninth and tenth centuries were periods of great external activity by the Indians, and it is probable that new ideas from the mother country were quickly adopted by those living abroad. Borobudur is, however, much more than a gigantic copy of an Indian model. Doubtless the tensions that existed between the Hindus and the Buddhists contributed to its greatness, and it is possible that it was conceived as a Buddhist answer to a Hindu challenge. But a monument so unique in the world as Borobudur could only have been built by an architectural genius.

, For what makes Borobudur so interesting is that it seems to be a symbol of all that Buddhism came to mean. The early stupas of Ceylon and India were merely places for the preserving of sacred relics. Their shape was of course also symbolic—the square base representing the Buddha's cloak, the circular dome his begging bowl, and the spire his umbrella—but these are lesser symbols. Borobudur seems

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to be an allegory of the entire theology of Buddhism. The proper way in which to examine this pyramid is to climb the steps to the first tier and circulate to the left, then, having completed the first round, to repeat the process on the second tier and so on until the top is reached. The reason for this procedure is that the various bas-reliefs along the galleries illustrate chronologically the events in Buddha's life. The facts of the religion and of its god are thus laid out with increasing beauty of design and care in execution as one ascends. Then at the first of the circular tiers one shifts from these particularities to direct consideration of the Lord Buddha and his disciples. The smaller Buddhas of the upper terraces are really Bodhisattvas—those who have renounced Nirvana in order to help their fellow men attain it. Thus having learned the story in the square sections, the visitor places offerings and praises those who have been the principal characters in the action: those, so to speak, who have reached the upper slopes of Olympus. This is the transitional step from observation to selection. The seventy-two Bodhisattvas on the upper tiers may therefore without exaggeration be compared to the great number of lesser gods or saints worshipped in other religions. They may also be considered as a manifestation of the many-sidedness of the Lord Buddha himself. Mere selection, however, is not enough, and therefore it is necessary to turn to the final gigantic stupa for the source and inspiration of all that appears below it. Since it contains no statue of the Buddha, it may be considered on a simple level as merely a representation of the Nirvana towards which the pilgrims at Borobudur, like pilgrims everywhere, have been climbing. But more than that, it seems to represent the whole inspiration of Buddhism. As is well known, Gautama Buddha considered himself as a reformer only: he had no thought of becoming, and indeed fought against all suggestions by others that he might become, deified after his death. Instead, what he really preached was a philosophy and a rational way of life. Therefore, unlike the cruciform shape of the Christian church, which records an extraordinary human fact (and which inevitably stresses the personality of Christ), the form suggested by the Buddha and embodied at Borobudur is quite outside of human events. It is pure form symbolic both of man's yearning for spirituality and of the enlightenment that comes at the end of the eightfold path. Thus architecturally the uppermost stupa represents the truth that inspires and gives meaning to the rows of smaller stupas below it and to the long galleries of bas-relief below them. This final stupa is, of course, the central focus of attention, as the top of any pyramid must be, but that it has a greater importance than its mere position would imply is suggested by the fact that from above one can see into the lower galleries,



PLATE I. *Stupa arrangement, upper terraces, Borobudur.*

II

BOROBUDUR
AND
PRAMBANAN

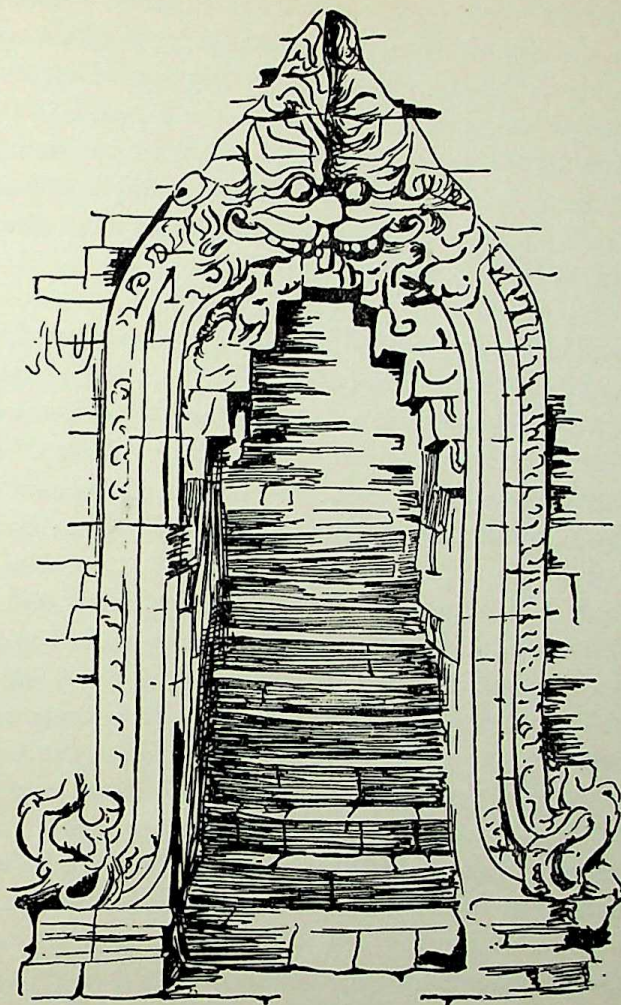


FIGURE 2. Gate over staircase connecting lower terraces of Borobudur.

whereas one cannot see up to the top from below. The whole monument therefore becomes an allegory of the structure of Buddhist philosophy.

Borobudur is thus an extraordinary artistic and religious achievement. The designers maintained the traditional shape of the stupa, which has a spired dome on a rectangular base, but by adapting contemporary Hindu features and producing an extremely complex pyramid, they created one of the world's greatest Buddhist monuments. Every detail of the structure seems to contribute to the total effect.

The care that was required for the carving of the bas-reliefs, the imaginative placing of small niches along the gallery walls, the bizarre gateways through which one must pass before mounting another tier, the complexity of the lower galleries compared with the simplicity of the upper—all these contribute to the grandeur of the whole design. Despite the immensity of the place, nothing is excessive, and no one feature is emphasized at the expense of others. Rather than being a temple without a god, as some have described it, it is a representation of the spirit that flows down from the topmost stupa. It is the very form of Buddhism itself.

I 2

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GOLDEN
AGES

The visitor to Djogjakarta will inevitably be asked by a Djogjanese which of the two great temples of the district he prefers—Borobudur or the Lara Djonggrang group at Prambanan. In a way it is a rather foolish question not unlike the Londoner's query to a foreigner whether he prefers St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey. The two Indonesian temples are equally dissimilar, not only because Borobudur is Buddhist and Prambanan is Hindu, but because their function and design are completely different.

Another difference one should add is that the Lara Djonggrang compound of temples (known popularly as Prambanan), of which the principal temple is devoted to Siva, the Hindu god of fertility and destruction, is but one of many *tjandis* (temples) found in the wide valley of Prambanan. Just behind the Siva compound, for example, is another enormous section called Tjandi Sewo which once must have been a Buddhist temple, and in many other locations, some in small country villages, others in open fields, there are other *tjandis*, like those of Kalasan and Sari: the one a curiously rectangular structure with windows which admit light to the sanctuaries within, the other a tall Buddhist temple—the oldest in the district, dating from the early part of the eighth century—on whose outside walls are carvings showing in miniature how the magnificent structure must have looked before it was destroyed. Despite the eerie clacking of bats' wings and the ugly beetles which infest its floor, the Sari rewards the visitor, for it contains an immense carved altarpiece or setting for the missing Buddha.

The extent of the temple ruins also illustrates another feature of Javanese worship, for it is generally agreed that the earlier religion of Java was connected with Hinduism through the cult of the dead. The early Indonesians were ancestor worshippers, and when Hindu and Buddhist priests arrived, they had to adapt themselves to the earlier beliefs—with the result that funeral rites assumed an importance they did not have in India. Many of the Javanese temples were therefore built as monuments to dead kings who in former times had themselves been deified but

who, with the advent of Hinduism, became gradually associated with an already existing Hindu god. Thus, for example, the statue of Siva in the great temple is thought to be a likeness of the Javanese king who built it. That tjandi means "House of the Death Goddess" and that the temples were all essentially funeral monuments also helps to explain their enormous number, for man's concern for his future life is often as strong an inspiration for building as is his piety.

Of all these many temples, the great central section or compound called Lara Djonggrang will doubtless attract the greatest interest of the visitor, since it is the largest ruin that has been reconstructed by Dutch and Indonesian archaeologists. Only a few miles from Djogjakarta, this tjandi is visible from some distance because its tall tower reaches above the trees like an incredibly ornate skyscraper. Indeed, the temple of Siva very much resembles, in its architectural form, the Empire State Building in New York. It is, of course, not so tall, but from the base it rises similarly in straight lines to the roof section, where it recedes in circular platforms of decreasing size to the central spire. That, at least, is the impression it gives from a distance, or at night when the carvings on the tower's surface become obscured.

Whatever the direction of approach, this central tower dominates the scene. As at Borobudur, all attention is directed towards it, and its eastern entrance is almost exactly at the center of the compound. One specifically Javanese feature of the place is the use of platforms. Not only are the principal temples, including that of Siva, on elevated bases, but the area as a whole is built on a series of gigantic terraces. In this way the theatrical effect of the approach is increased, for as one climbs the steps, one momentarily loses sight of all but the top of the highest tower, and then when one reaches the top of the platform, the whole is dramatically revealed in a close-up.

The central temple of Siva, with its many lingams or phallus-shaped turrets, dominates the site, but there are in fact five other temples in the compound. All are smaller versions of the central temple. Flanking the Siva temple are two of the larger of these—those dedicated to Vishnu and Brahma. The temple to Vishnu is the best preserved (or reconstructed) of these, and it contains a statue of the god. The Brahma temple is still a ruin, but it also contains a statue. Both of these temples are decorated with carved figures and bas-reliefs.

Opposite the principal entrance to the Siva temple is a smaller temple devoted to Nandi, the bull sacred to the Hindus because he is Siva's vehicle of transport. On either side of Nandi's temple are two others which balance the row of temples opposite. These are of the same proportion as the Nandi temple, and one contains

a statue of a lesser manifestation of Siva, whereas the other is empty. It probably contained either Siva's guru (teacher) or possibly his wife Durga. All these are well worth exploring not only for their carvings but for the vantage points they provide for viewing the huge central temple.

This structure rises from two platforms which are reached by long stairways rising from the ground through pointed archways. The platforms are square, but at each corner there are indentations, and an inferior corner is introduced, thus producing a triplet of right angles at each corner. Along the outside of these platforms are parapets richly carved with repeated patterns in bas-relief containing a figure of a crouching lion surrounded by stylized figures from nature like trees or birds. Above these are rows of small niches, each like a miniature temple surmounted with a lingam. It is possible to walk along the interior platforms, and on the inside of the parapet wall and against the building itself are a series of paneled bas-reliefs which depict scenes from the *Ramayana*. These are most curious and are in a much better state of preservation than those at Borobudur.

The difference between the Hindu and the Buddhist approach to temple architecture is illustrated in the paneled sculpture of the two places. At Borobudur the bas-reliefs are often indistinguishable because of the lack of differentiation between characters, but at the Siva temple in Prambanan the story is clear even to a person only slightly acquainted with the Hindu tale. This is partly a matter of artistry, but it also seems to be a reflection of the Hindu interest in the human story and in the endless human adventures that befell their gods, such as the mythological story of the monkey king Hanuman, who built a bridge to Ceylon in order to rescue Rama's wife Sita.

At Lara Djonggrang one is faced with nothing like the bafflement that is presented by Borobudur; instead, there is straightforward god-worship through images of the gods. Such symbolism as exists, as in the lingams on the parapet or on the top of the tower, merely represents the principal function of the god; everything else, including the bas-reliefs and even the statues of the gods within the temple, is connected with the worship or admiration of Siva. In other words, the Hindu temple is much more like a Christian church than Borobudur is.

On the four sides of the Siva temple, above the uppermost gallery, are four small sanctuaries containing images of Siva and other deities. These chambers are reached by a continuation of the main staircases that rise from the ground below. In the principal sanctuary Siva is found in his highest manifestation. He is a striking four-armed, three-eyed figure, carrying a trident, a snake, and other symbols of his

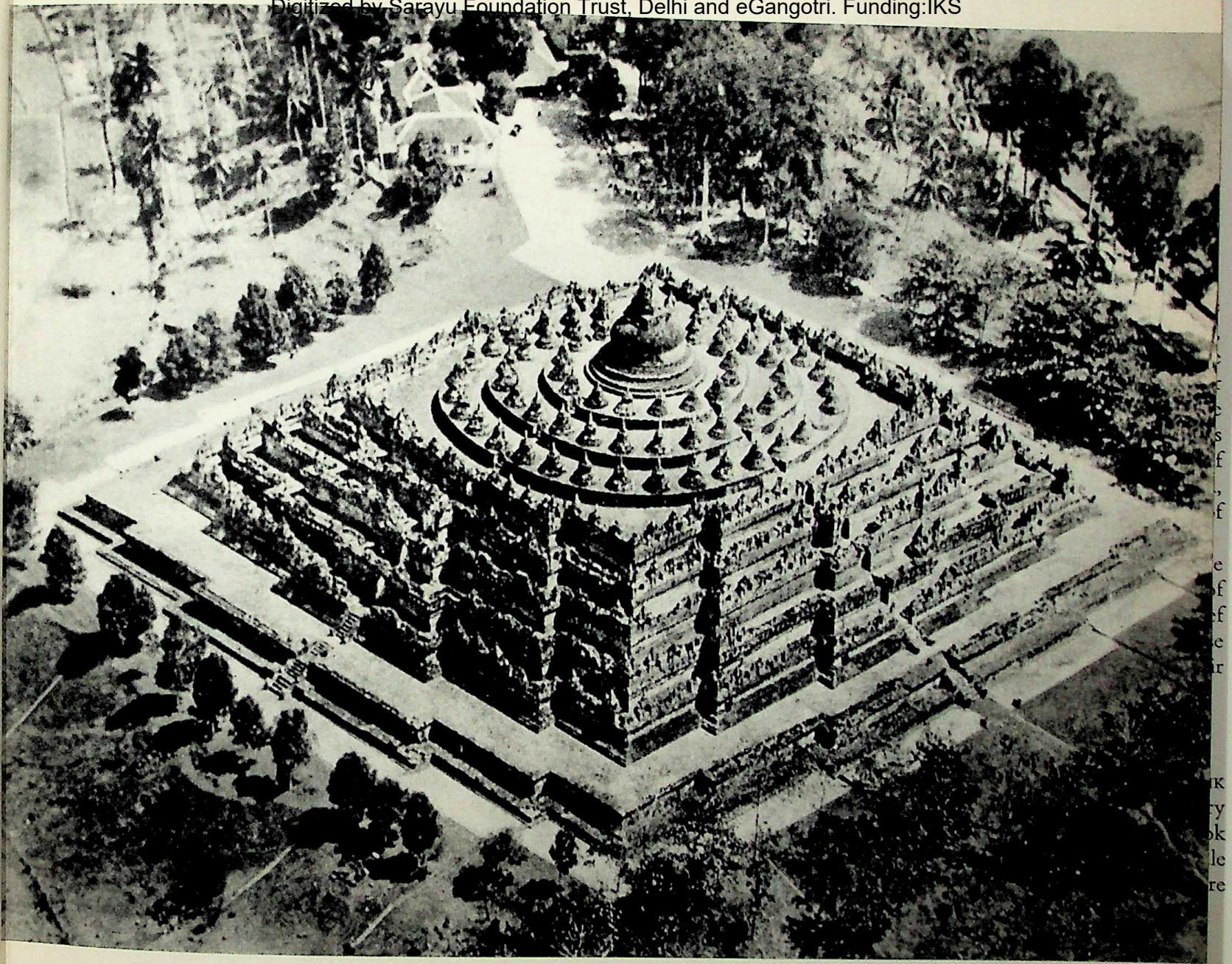


PLATE 2. *Aerial view of Borobudur. (Courtesy of the Fogg Museum, Harvard University)*

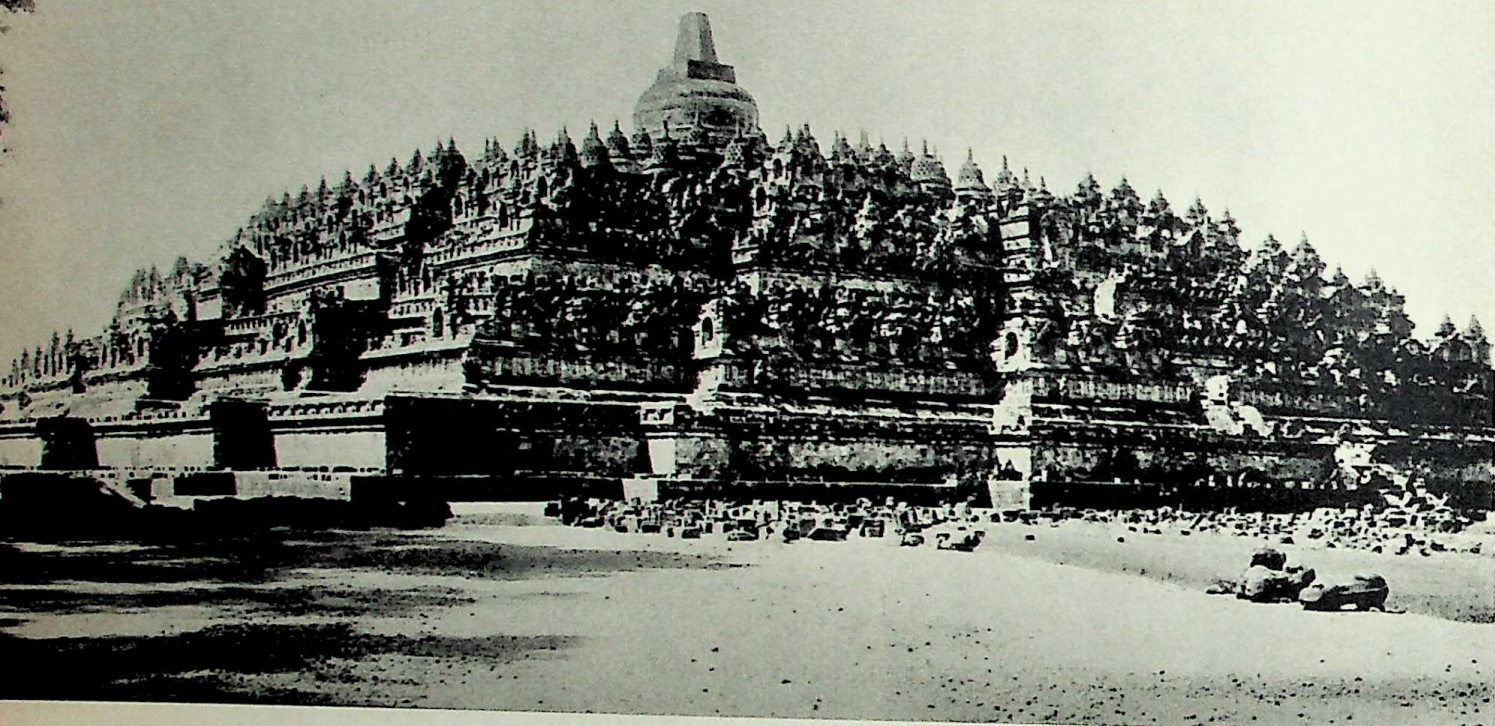


PLATE 3. *General view of Borobudur. (Courtesy of the Fogg Museum, Harvard University)*

PLATE 4. *Lower terraces, Borobudur.
(Palmer Pictures, San Francisco)*



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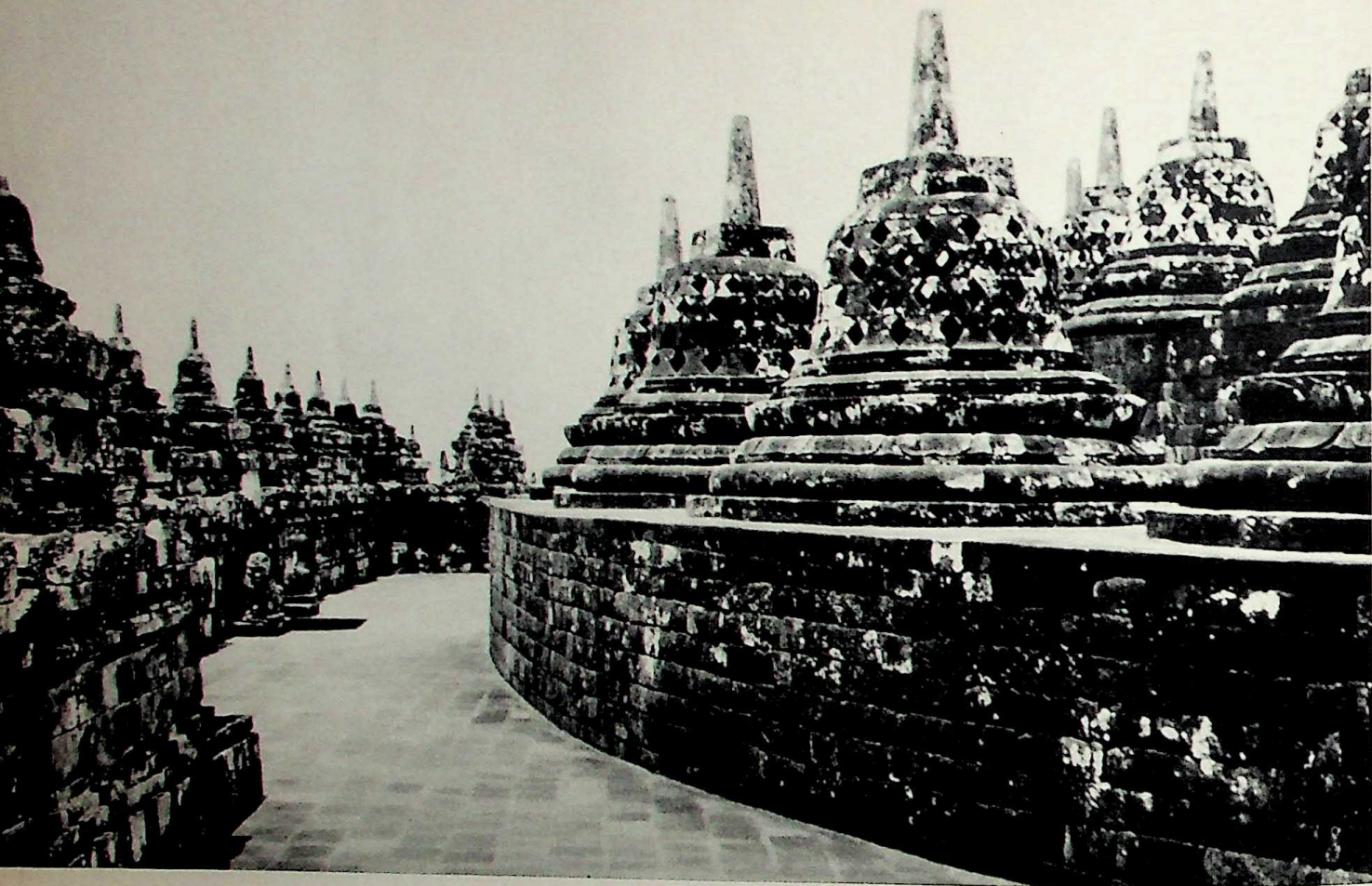


PLATE 5. *Sixth terrace, Borobudur.*

PLATE 6. *Detail of bas-relief, lower terrace, Borobudur.*
(Plamer Pictures, San Francisco)

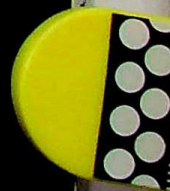
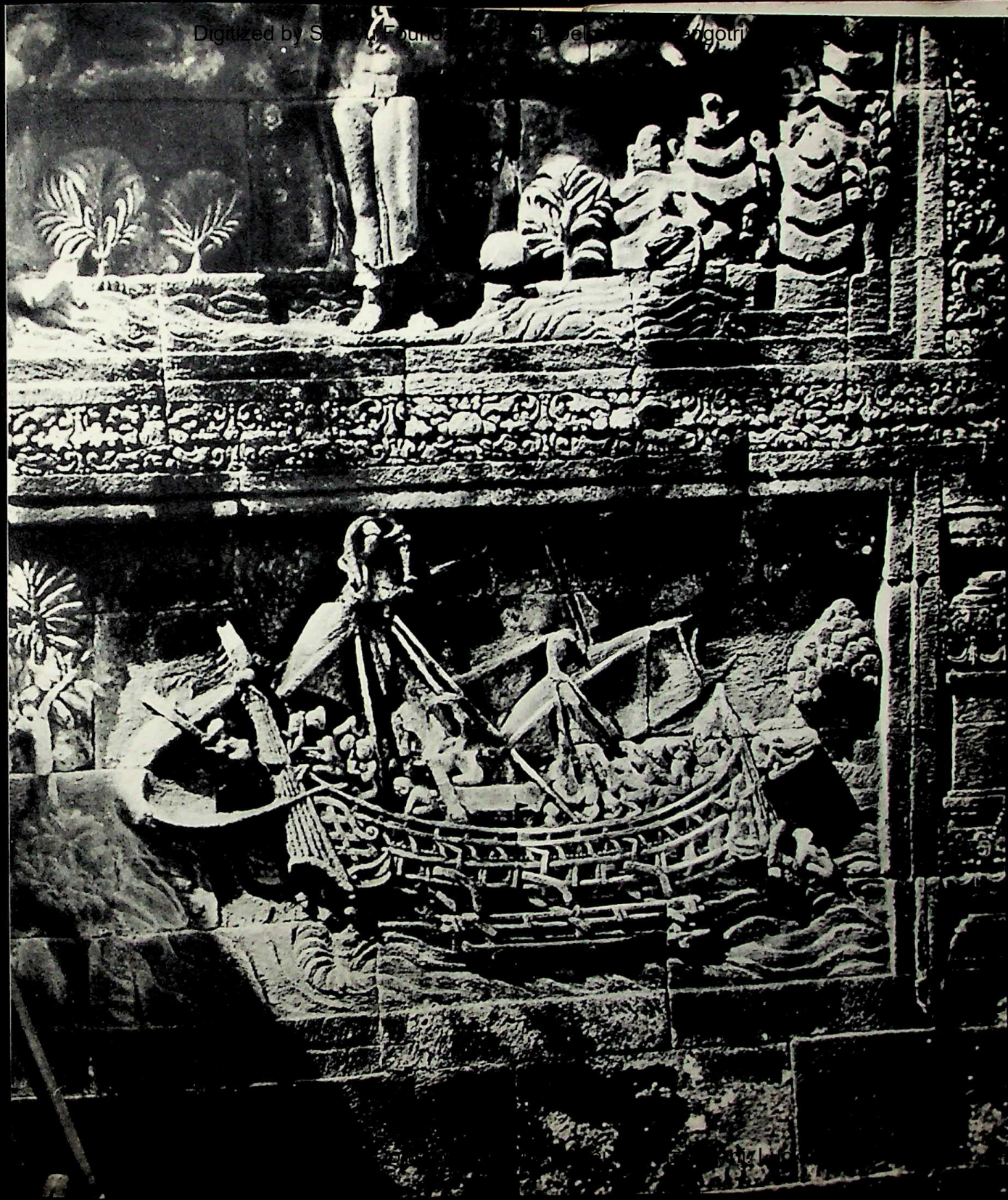


PLATE 7. *Siva Temple, Lara Djonggrang, Prambanan. (Courtesy of the Indonesian Consulate, San Francisco)*

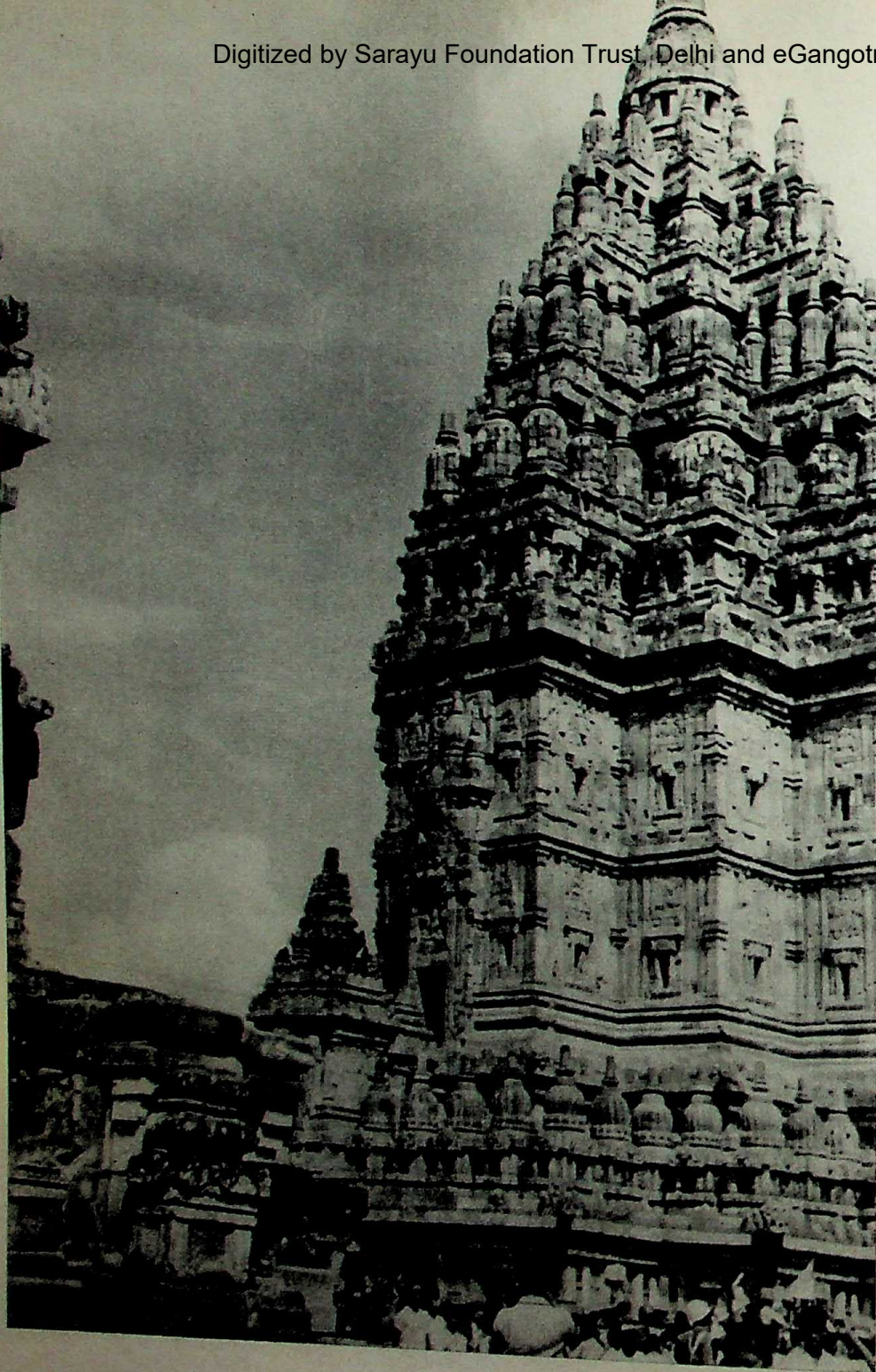
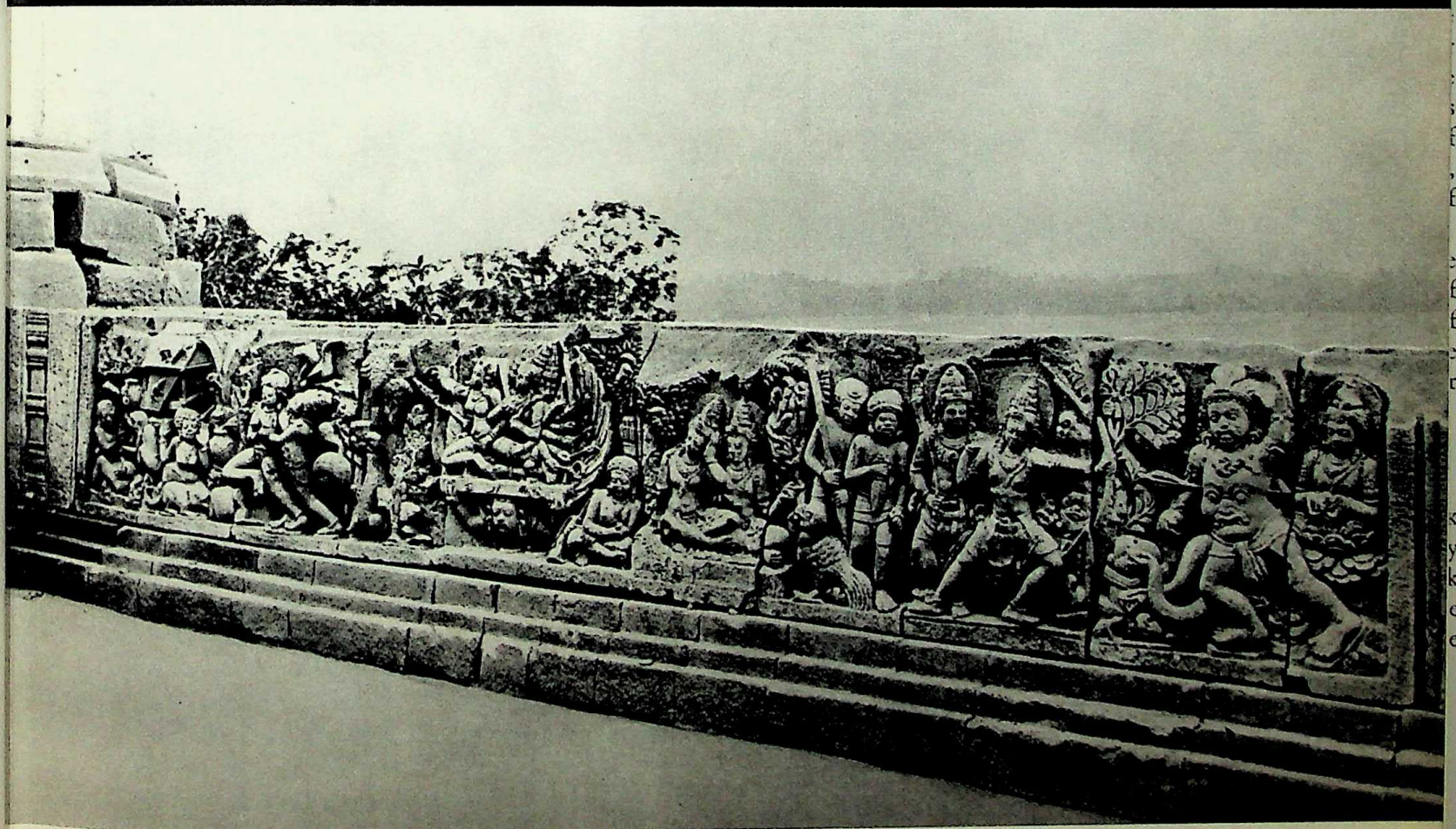


PLATE 8. *Bas-relief, Lara Djonggrang, Prambanan. (Courtesy of the Fogg Museum, Harvard University)*



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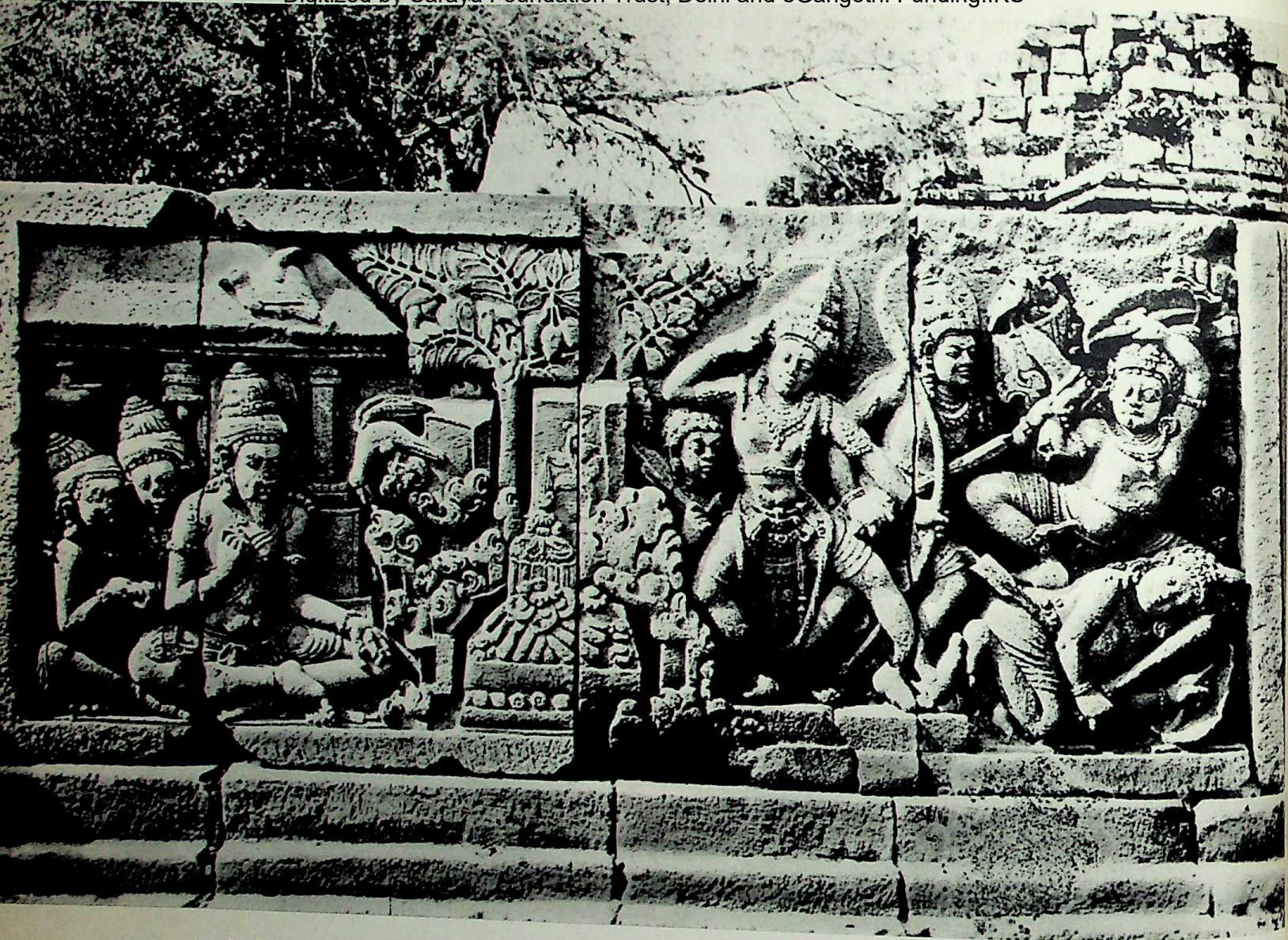


PLATE 9. Detail of bas-relief, Lara Djonggrang, Prambanan.
(Courtesy of the Fogg Museum, Harvard University)

divinity. A connecting gallery leads to the next sanctuary, that of Siva in the form of Maharshi, a guru or sage. This figure is plump and bearded and has a rather blank expression on its face. In the next chamber is Ganesa, the son of Siva, who has four arms and the head of an elephant. He is the abolisher of hindrances and always wears a benign expression, holding the end of his trunk in his left hand. Finally there is Siva's wife Durga, an eight-armed figure carrying all manner of mystic symbols. There is a legend connected with her or rather with Lara Djonggrang, as she (and indeed the whole tjandi) is known by the people of the district. Evidently Lara Djonggrang was once wooed by a young man called Bandung whom she required in one night to build a temple containing a thousand statues to prove his love. With the aid of supernatural spirits, Bandung set about the task, and just before dawn the temple was complete except for one statue which, with contrary supernatural powers, Lara Djonggrang had prevented Bandung from creating. But Bandung was not one to be trifled with. Irritated by her trickery, he cursed Lara Djonggrang and turned her into stone. Thus the thousandth statue was completed, and Lara Djonggrang sits today in Siva's temple. She is credited with marvelous powers, curiously enough by women who go to her in search of a husband.

All of these figures and legendary stories, not forgetting Nandi across the way, lend a certain charm to the temple. It is not so much the charm of the temple as the charm of the religion of the Hindus, but the one inevitably affects the other.

Yet charming is hardly an adjective one would use to describe the enormous central temple. Magnificent or awe-inspiring seems more appropriate for a structure which rises from its top platform for more than a hundred feet into the sky and whose roof is turreted with dozens of lingams. Grandeur and magnificence are also of course consonant with Hinduism and are especially pertinent to Siva and to a temple whose principal function in Javanese terms was to be a funeral monument. What therefore appears at first to be a paradox—that a work of art should be both magnificent and charming—is simply a quality Hindu art possesses, for every visitor will notice how in keeping the human and charming details are with the grandeur of the architectural plan.

As one looks at the many complexes of temples now standing in ruins in the valley of Prambanan, one naturally wonders what it is in a people that makes them capable of building such great works of art in one era and so incapable of building them in others. Why has the artistic strain of Greece withered? How is it that the Peruvian Indians have so degenerated since the coming of Pizarro? The answers to these questions are partly found in politics and economics, but even if

one can explain the change, it is not always so easy to state why it was that greatness of artistic creation once existed.

Certainly so far as Prambanan is concerned, the artistic inspiration came from India, and probably Indian architects and artists supervised the building of the temples. It is true, too, that Prambanan was built when Hindu influence was at its height in Indonesia. A further probable reason for the artistic excellence of Prambanan was the Hindu desire to outshine the Buddhist creation at Borobudur.* This conjecture would suggest that rivalry or challenge played its part in artistic inspiration. Yet one wonders why the advent of Islam in Indonesia produced no mosques of artistic interest such as are found, for example, in India.

Whatever the reason for this decline, the great temple of Siva stands again, and reconstruction work continues at other parts of the Lara Djonggrang compound. Despite neglect and outright depredation, this temple, like the one at Borobudur, has somehow endured. Even though Buddhism and Hinduism have long since been replaced in Java by Islam, which itself more recently is losing ground to communism, these temples still have a significance and meaning for any who will take the trouble to consider them. Their value, therefore, seems enhanced rather than reduced by later historical events.

Why it is that at certain times art and religious fervor combine in a people to produce greatness, no one probably can really say. But to judge from the example set by Prambanan and Borobudur, religion seems to be the more important of the two. Nonreligious ruins, like those of Pompeii or the Inca town of Machu Picchu, may be admired and certainly are of sociological and anthropological interest. But, except for certain human traits that one still sees mirrored there today, these places are not really very interesting. What is more interesting is the spiritual manifestation of a people, for there the artistic quality usually seems higher. At Machu Picchu, for instance, the most aesthetically pleasing piece is the altar to the sun god placed in the uppermost part of the city.

At the temples of Prambanan and Borobudur, which of course are by definition religious structures, this same religious inspiration is found. Even though the teachings of the Vedas and of the Lord Buddha were importations to Java, they seem to have provided sufficient inspiration for the building of artistically and humanly interesting buildings.

* This is mere conjecture, for the enormous Buddhist Tjandi Sewo, which stands beside the Lara Djonggrang, has not been satisfactorily dated, nor is it really known whether it was more or less magnificent than the Lara Djonggrang. Nevertheless, the Lara Djonggrang was certainly built after Borobudur was.

Yet somehow between these forces—a religious spirit that is neither fanatic nor diffuse, an artistic skill that is neither inhuman nor sentimental—a balance must be made, for it is not difficult to distinguish quality in most art. At the Lara Djong-grang Temple at Prambanan, there is a pleasing mixture of grandeur and humanity, both suffused with religious veneration, but the reason Borobudur is so much more interesting and so much more magnificent is that it embodies these features of the Hindu temple, but in addition combines them into a majestic symbol of the universe, executed with a daring and skill that makes it unique.

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BOROBUDUR
AND
PRAMBANAN

TWO · ANGKOR

THE GREAT ruins at Angkor are so enormous and are spread out over so wide an area that comparisons with any other ruins except perhaps those of Egypt seem impossible. Yet the monuments that remain are only a small portion of the buildings that must originally have covered the countryside. Once, where there is now only jungle or desert, there were irrigation canals which transformed the whole of north and central Cambodia into fertile valleys where as many as three crops of rice were grown in a year. Once, where now there is nothing, there were palaces and shops and private houses. Since these buildings were built of wood and thatch, they disappeared when the jungle closed in after the collapse of Cambodia's might and power more than five centuries ago. The many temples which now seem isolated in this area of over 50 square miles once stood in centers of population where they were built by the ruling class to provide places of worship for those living outside of the walls of the capital.

These outlying towns, even in the days when the empire flourished, could not of course be compared to the majestic royal city of Angkor Thom, whose magnificence is still attested to by the ruins that remain. Here, grouped around the central square, are no fewer than six enormous temples. Along one side of the square, and stretching for 380 yards, is the Elephant Terrace, twelve to fifteen feet high and decorated with Garudas, elephants, and dancing figures carved in relief. Upon this platform stood the royal palaces, and from here the Emperor of the Khmers watched the performance of festivals in the square. Opposite the terrace is a row of twelve high towers from which the members of the nobility



PLATE 10. *General view, Bantay Srei Temple, Angkor.*



PLATE II. *Courtyard and platform, Bantay Srei Temple, Angkor.*

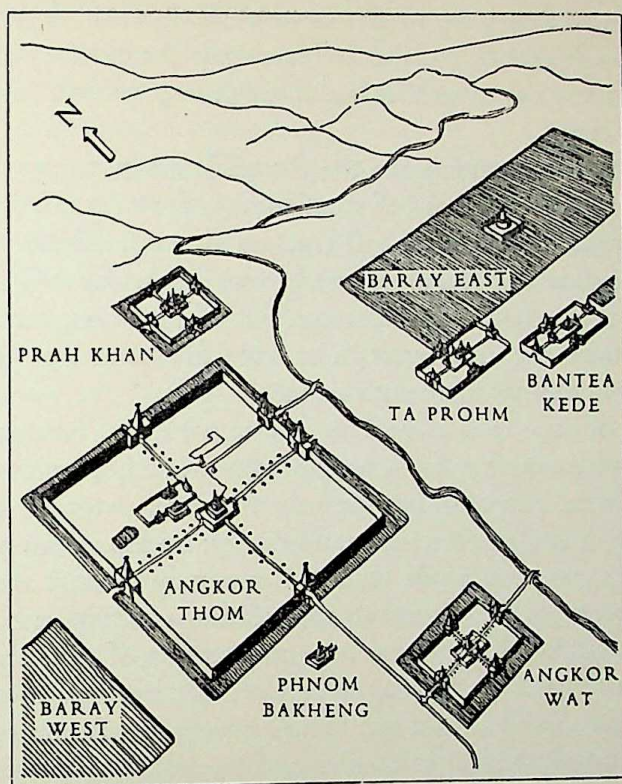


FIGURE 3. *Plan of Angkor.* (Courtesy of Penguin Books Ltd.)

used to observe the festivities. Behind them are two large guesthouses where visiting pilgrims used to stay. Five roads lead away from the central square to enormous domed gates surmounted by carved human faces, and around the whole city stretches a wall seven miles long.

The great empire of the Khmers, which was responsible for these monuments, underwent its most magnificent period under the dynasty that ruled between A.D. 950 and 1250. At that time the Khmers ruled all of Indo-China, enjoyed a wealth that the area has never subsequently known, and even had an army of five million men. Now all of this glory is gone. All that remains are the ruins of the great city and the temples, which, being built of stone, have withstood the neglect that encompassed the area for over five hundred years. These temples, especially Angkor Wat, which stands outside of the city walls in a compound that measures a whole square mile, are of course objects of the greatest curiosity to the visitor. All together, in the immediate neighborhood of Angkor Thom, there are more

than thirty of these temples, and they seem to vary as much in style as they do in size. Some rise in tiers up to a height of 100 feet and have gigantic towers at the top; others are approached by long avenues that lead through huge gates to causeways built over water-filled moats.

What immediately attracts the attention are the incredible tricks nature has played on these temples during their centuries of abandonment, for trees and vines now grow out of the battered stone roofs of the galleries, and like huge livid snakes, immense roots stretch for hundreds of feet along the gutters and window ledges of the buildings. This aspect of the ruins is the most romantic of all, for one immediately thinks of the excitement the discoverers must have felt when they first came upon this fantastic city in the late nineteenth century.

The architectural scheme of the site as a whole is at first not clear, however. Except for the feeling of respect one has for a people who created so much (a feeling mixed with horror when one considers the ruin that later overtook it), one remains quite baffled by Angkor. It is vast, extraordinary; no sooner has one finished being amazed by one enormous pile than it is necessary to start again with another. The initial impression, then, is merely that of being overwhelmed.

Yet there are certain principles which governed the construction of these temples. Like those in Java, the temples at Angkor were built as memorials to the dead. Each king was required to build at least one temple during his lifetime and, as in Egypt and Mexico, he usually built it in the shape of a pyramid. This shape derives from Hindu cosmography, in which the world is pictured as a flat rectangle bordered on all sides by immeasurable seas. In the center of the land rises Mount Meru, where the gods reside. Thus the pyramidal temple was originally an artificial mountain and was designed as a residence for the god, should he desire to come to earth. It was to be made as attractive as possible for the deity, and it had to supply all his needs. Although their religion later became mixed with Buddhism, the Khmers were originally Hindus, and Siva and Vishnu never really lost their popularity.

Not all of the temples are pyramids, however, and there are a number which spread out horizontally. These temples extend for hundreds of yards through corridors and archways towards a central circular chapel containing an image of the deity. This second type of temple, of which the Bantay Kdei, Ta Phrom, and Prah Khan are the most impressive examples, is designed in a cruciform shape with at least one encircling outer wall.

In order to understand how these two forms of Khmer art developed, one must allow plenty of time, since it is impossible to examine the work of three centuries

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in one day. The best way to begin is to concentrate on two or three temples in hopes that a clue to their meaning may emerge from a study of their details. Three of the most rewarding in this sense, and also the most interesting architecturally, are the Bantay Srei, the Bayon Temple, and Angkor Wat.

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ANGKOR

Twenty-two miles northeast of the main group of temples at Angkor Thom, and reached by a bumpy and dusty road, is the small but exquisite temple called Bantay Srei. That this temple, built about A.D. 967 during the reign of King Jayavarman V, is one of the earlier Angkor temples is surprising, for it is one of the most beautiful. Normally in the development of an art there are three stages—experiment, solidification, and decadence—of which the second is usually the more satisfying stage, but at the Bantay Srei, built in the first period, both the architecture and the sculpture are mature and nearly perfectly blended.* Bantay Srei, which means “the gorgeous monument,” is dedicated to the Hindu god Siva, and therefore the long avenue of approach is lined with columns suggestive of the phallus or lingam. This paved avenue is entered by a carved sandstone gate at the eastern end of the site and leads to the middle gate, whose archways and porticoes are also richly decorated with carvings. From there a second causeway crosses a moat and leads up to the temple gate itself. In the morning sun, the sight of this building of dark pink sandstone against the green of the nearby jungle and the blue of the sky suggests why Bantay Srei received its name.

One unusual feature of this temple is its principal gate, for instead of having the usual simple triangular pediment, it has two huge slabs of stone which rise from each side of the gateway like pieces of pink ribbon, joining in a bow at the top and supporting an additional fan-shaped slab. There are two of these pediments on the principal gateway, and they are the finest feature of the temple.

Compared to other temples at Angkor, the Bantay Srei is not large, and the total area within the inner walls is only about 100 yards square. But every stone is so delicately carved, and the monument is in such excellent condition despite its relatively recent discovery, that it is perhaps the most lovely of all Khmer temples.

* The dating of temples at Angkor is a matter of some controversy among archaeologists. The date noted above for the building of the Bantay Srei comes from the French scholar Parmentier. On the other hand, Professor Rowland of Harvard dates it from the fourteenth century, after the building of Angkor Wat and the Bayon. The evidence upon which he bases this opinion is purely sculptural. He suggests, however, that it is possible that the temple was founded in the tenth century and then reconstructed in the fourteenth. This seems a likely solution to the difficulty, for even though the sculpture indicates late construction, the architectural plan seems to suggest that it was built before Angkor Wat. I have left what is said above as it was originally written, however, since dating is so much a matter of calculated guesswork.

Inside the principal gate there is a lesser archway before which a statue of Nandi, Siva's bull, rests on the ground. On either side are two small oblong temples or libraries. Ahead is yet another gate guarded by two stone lions, and beyond is a platform upon which stand the three principal temples. Around the edge of this platform are stone statues of demons with heads of monkeys and birds. Each of the three shrines has four low doors, of which three are false, as is the custom, but the door panels of all are intricately carved in geometric designs. The three temples are surmounted by tiered towers 30 to 40 feet tall and built in a shape reminiscent of a pine cone or a beehive. Both temples and towers are so covered with carvings of garlands of flowers, of animals, and of Apsaras or dancing girls—all executed with great skill and remaining in an extraordinary state of preservation—that the whole is literally like a jewel.

Bantay Srei is also an interesting temple to visit because it illustrates a particular stage in the development of Khmer architecture. It combines some of the features of the pyramidal temples like Ta Keo and the Mebon Oriental with some of the characteristics of the low spreading temples that are made up of concentric walls and long galleries leading to a central chapel. What is impressive about the horizontal temples are the endless galleries and avenues which one must pass through before reaching the central sanctuary. The unimpressive feature is that the sanctuary is of the same height as the rest of the temple. The pyramid temples, on the other hand, are too unsubtle: they lack any sort of approach and are come upon too suddenly. The Bantay Srei is one of the first temples at Angkor to combine the towers of the pyramid temple with the long avenues of the horizontal temple.

The next stage of development—it has been called the culmination of Khmer art—is seen at the enormous temple of Angkor Wat, in which all of the features of both styles of temple are combined in one monument.

Its effectiveness is partly, of course, a result of its size. It seems very like Versailles and is, if anything, even more striking. The land it occupies covers a full square mile. The surrounding moat, 100 yards wide, is crossed by a stone causeway whose entrance is guarded by carved stone nagas or cobras which stretch along the side of the ramp and up to the first gateway.

This gate consists of a group of three beehive towers, from either side of which long pillared galleries stretch to a length of over 250 yards. From this first gate a wide causeway, raised two or three yards above the ground, runs for nearly 900 yards up to the base of the temple. It is decorated along its edges with balustrades of nagas, and halfway to its destination it passes two libraries and ponds placed on either side. The architect's plan was clearly to inspire awe, for, from the entrance

PLATE 12. *Gate, Bantay Srei Temple, Angkor. (Photo by Eliot Elisofon)*



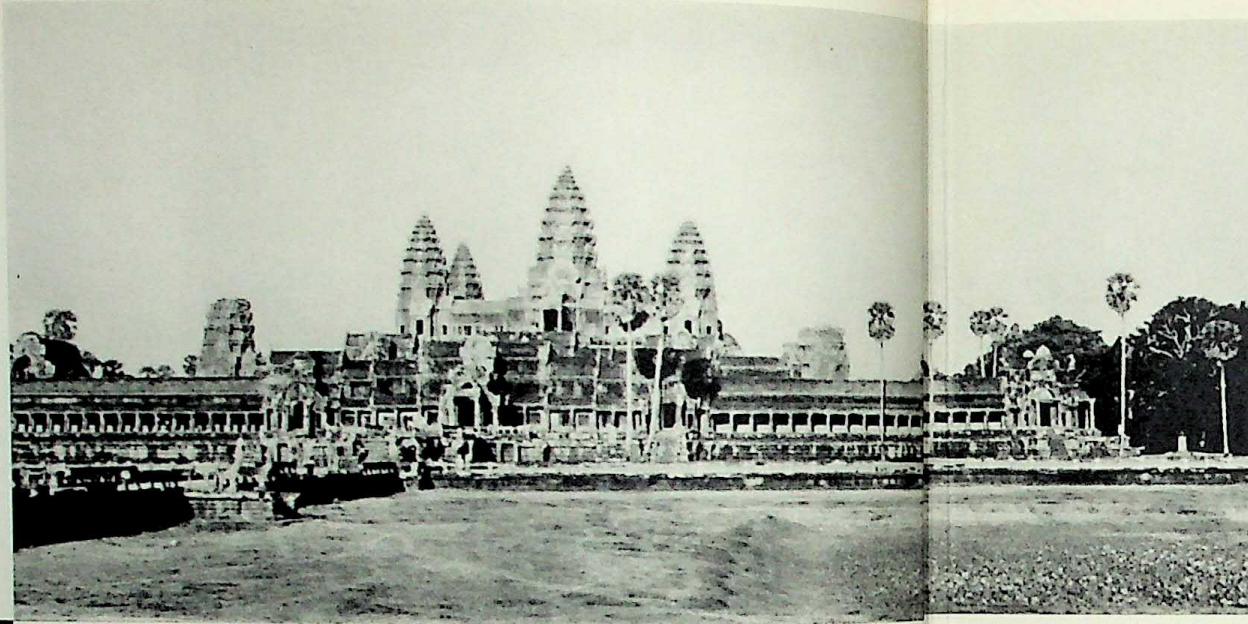


PLATE 14. General view of Angkor Wat.

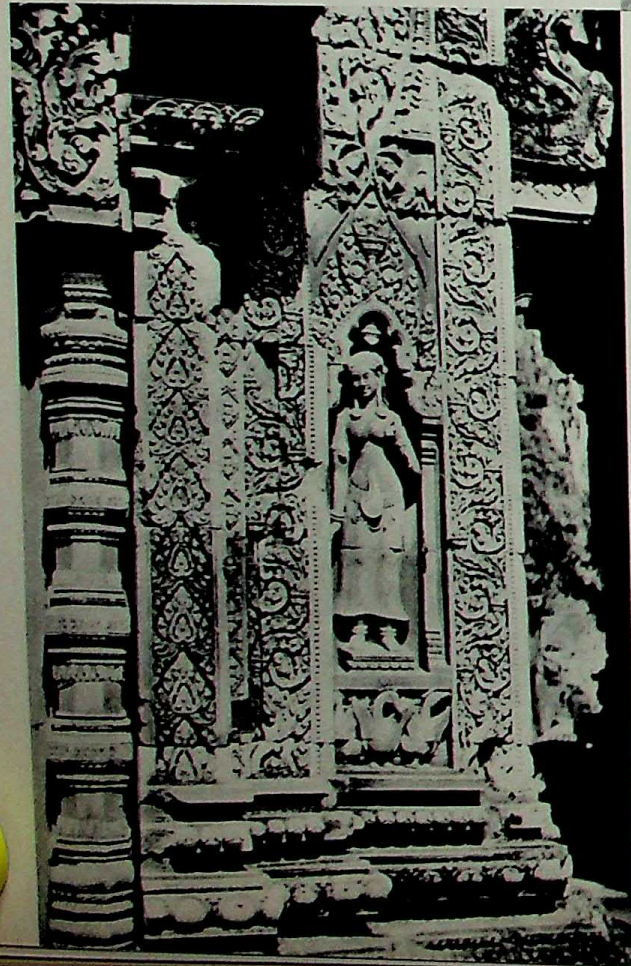


PLATE 13. Apsaras, Bantay Srei Temple, Angkor.

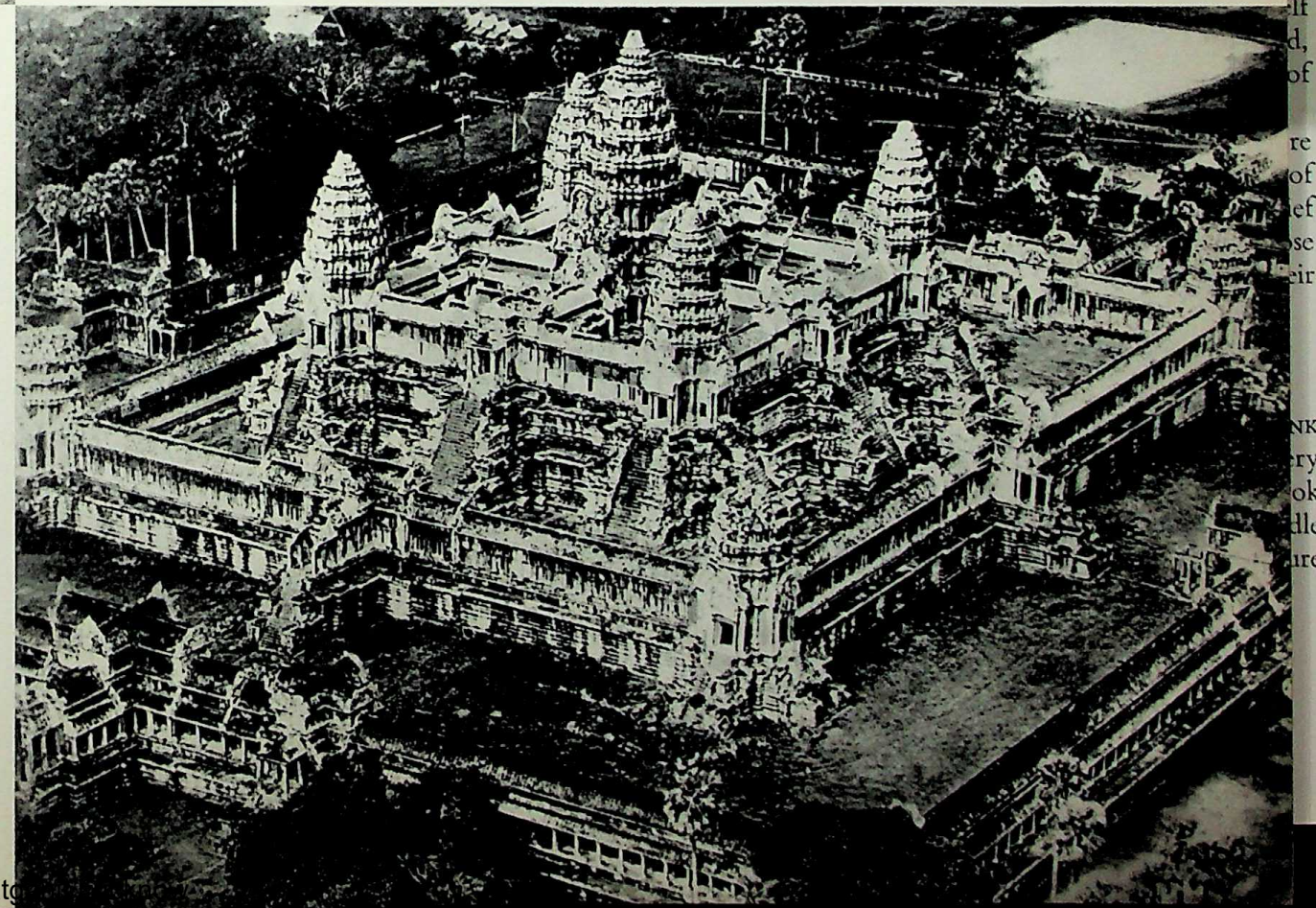


PLATE 15. Aerial view of central block, Angkor Wat.
(Courtesy of the Fogg Museum, Harvard University)

PLATE 16. *Upper terrace, Angkor Wat.*

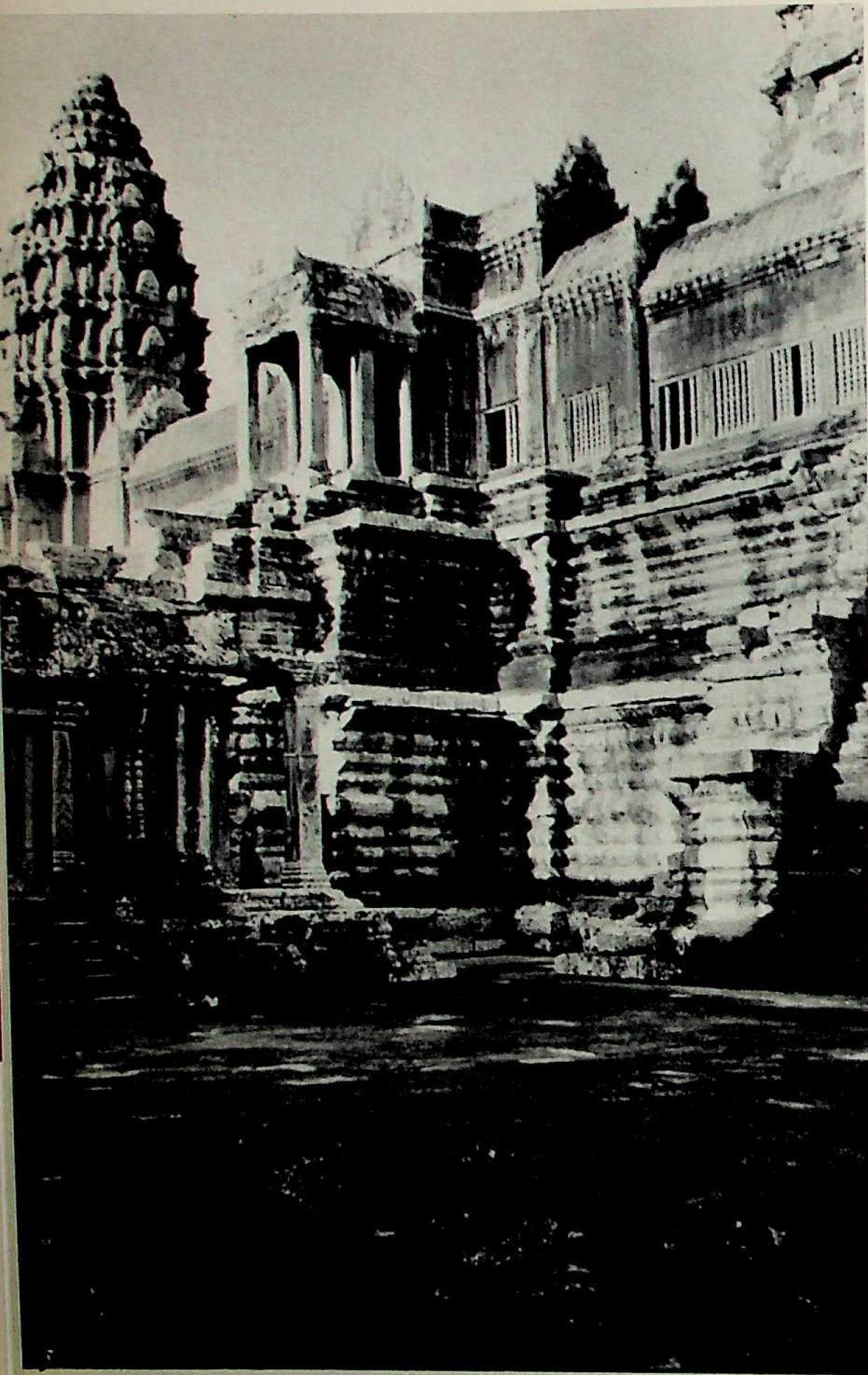


PLATE 17. *Gate to Angkor Thom. (Photo by Eliot Elisofon)*





PLATE 18. *General view of Bayon Temple, Angkor.*

PLATE 19. *Interior gallery and tower, Bayon Temple, Angkor.*
(Photo by Eliot Elisofon)





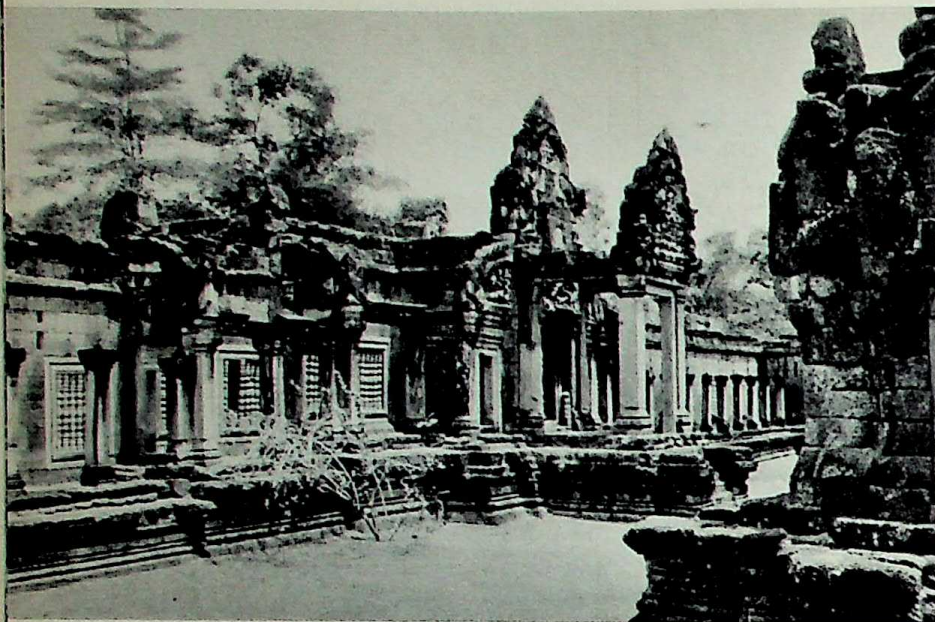


PLATE 20. *Interior courtyard, Bantay Samre, Angkor.*

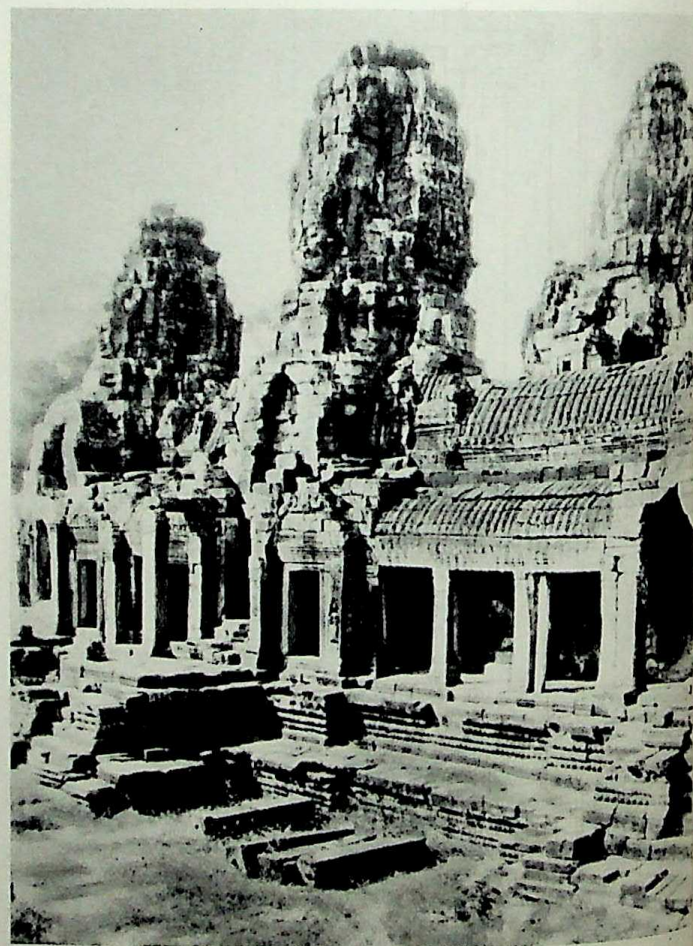
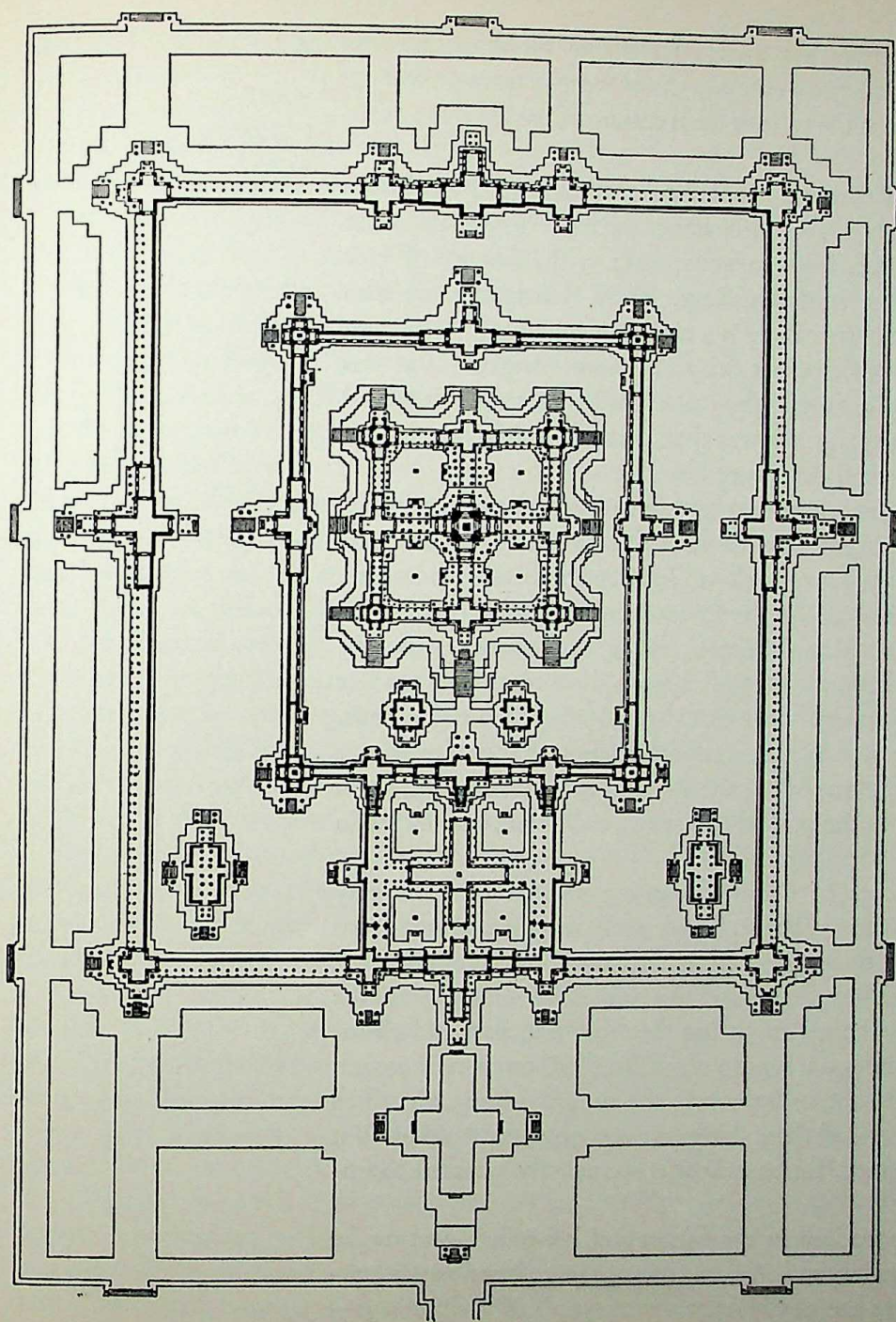


PLATE 21. *Outer gallery, Bayon Temple, Angkor.*
(Courtesy of the Fogg Museum, Harvard University)



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FIGURE 4. *Architectural plan of main block, Angkor Wat. (Courtesy of Penguin Books Ltd.)*

gate, the mountainous temple appears like a dream castle in the distance. This effect is increased by the fact that the rise to the top of the temple, through gallery after gallery, is more prolonged from the west or main entrance than from the other three sides, which rise more steeply.

All around the base of the temple there is a roofed gallery supported by columns and decorated with carvings in bas-relief. At the center of the western side is another gate which, after a brief open space, leads to stairs rising to the first set of four courtyards surrounded by another roofed gallery. These courtyards are also separated by galleries, and at each corner there is a chapel or sanctuary. At present these are dedicated to the Lord Buddha, but originally, since Angkor Wat was built by Suryavaram II (A.D. 1113-c. 1150), who was a Hindu, they were dedicated to Vishnu. The level of these courtyards is lower than that of the galleries, and on either side of each are additional small chapels or libraries.

Further climbing brings one to another open terrace 140 yards square, containing two small temples. The final ascent is made from this platform. On each side of the central block three very steep staircases rise to the upper galleries and towers. These galleries are cruciform like those on the lower terrace; at each of the four corners there is a tall tiered tower and in the center, where the galleries cross, rises the central and highest tower. In height it is 139 feet from the terrace, and 219 feet from the ground below, which is roughly the elevation of Notre Dame de Paris. Between the major rounded towers at the corners of the structure there are shorter square towers, and the courtyards formed by the galleries are sunken. In each of the towers there is a chapel, and in the central tower there are four, one facing in each direction.

It is an extraordinary experience to climb this enormous pile of dark gray masonry. In all directions run endless galleries. The towers are gigantic and from close below seem even larger than they appear from a distance. One has the feeling of being enclosed in a gigantic architectural maze. In a sense it is something like the Victor Emmanuel monument in Rome, for it has the same hugeness and elaborateness, which cause stiffness, although it is not vulgar like the Roman monument. But its planning, the exaggerated western approach, the sunken courtyards which emphasize the surrounding heights—all these things are too obvious. Angkor Wat seems almost too elaborately planned, for somehow it seems only planned to impress.

A certain stiffness can also be noticed in the friezes and bas-reliefs, and unlike those of Bantay Srei, they seem uninspired. A formula appears to have been adopted—necessary perhaps, since there are nearly 1300 square yards of sculpturings—

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but the freshness of design found in Bantay Srei and the exuberance of the bas-reliefs of the Bayon are lacking in Angkor Wat.

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Yet these are small faults to find with what is, after all, one of the greatest architectural achievements of the East. In size alone it has few equals in the world, and it represents the execution of a plan not even considered possible in most other civilizations. It also represents the successful continuation of the two earlier forms of Khmer temple, since it embodies the immensity of the pyramid temple and the dramatic mystery of the horizontal temple. It is therefore, in more than one sense, the culmination of Khmer art.

Shortly after Angkor Wat was built, there came to the throne of Cambodia a new king, Jayavarman VII, who had embraced Buddhism and whose task it was to rebuild an Angkor that had been badly destroyed by a Cham fleet. Clearly the most colorful personality among all the Khmer kings, he is known for his great sympathy and love for his people and especially for the extraordinary number of buildings erected during his reign. So great was this number that Jayavarman VII, in fact, bankrupted the country, and after his death no further buildings of importance were constructed. His reign marked the beginning of the end of Khmer power. It is true that many of the buildings put up during the years from 1181 to about 1200 were hastily built and that workmanship suffered under the pressure of quantity, yet the amazing fact is that Jayavarman alone built more than all his predecessors combined. He is largely responsible for the city of Angkor Thom, and the greatest architectural achievement of his reign is the Bayon Temple, which is situated in the exact center of his capital.

Unfortunately the present ruin is in a sad condition; many of its arches have fallen and many of its walls are destroyed. Still, with its dozens of towers, each with four carved human faces pointing to the four quarters of the globe, it is one of the most mysteriously evocative of all the world's ruins.

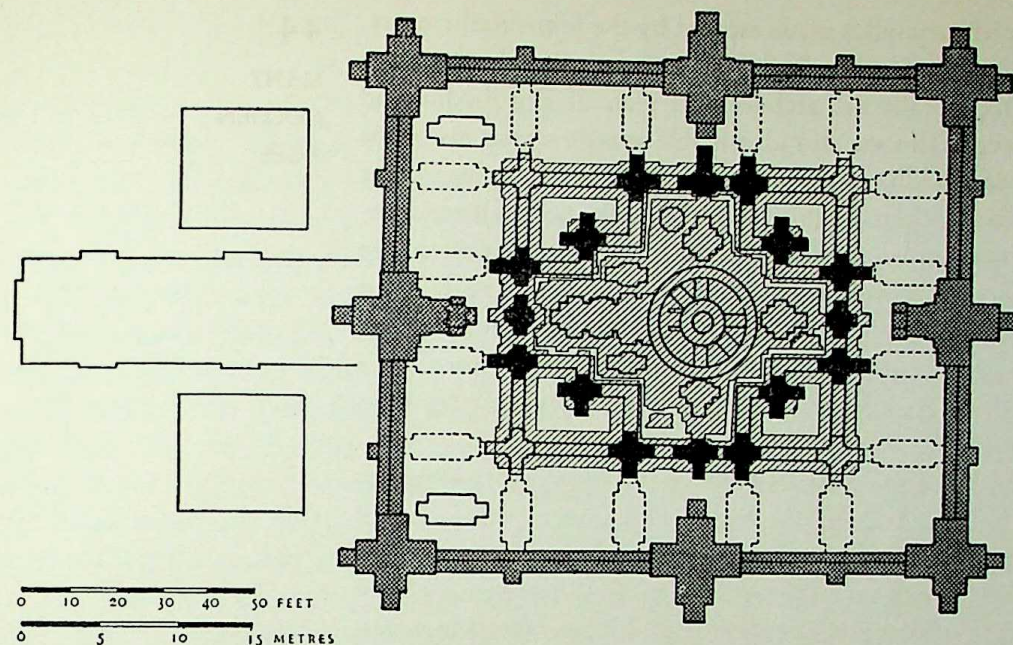
Despite its central location, the Bayon has nothing of the dramatic setting of Angkor Wat; rather it squats unobtrusively at a bend of the road, keeping its enigma hidden from the distance. It is, however, every bit as large as the central block of Angkor Wat, although its size is not immediately obvious; indeed, it only becomes clear when one mounts the steps to the main platform of the four-faced towers. From there, with views possible both up and down, one also senses the complexity of the place. This quality permits the Bayon to accomplish its psychological and religious purpose with more success than any other of the Angkor temples that are supposed to represent Mount Meru. The impression of being on a hill is particularly strong in the Bayon because of its many pinnacles and peaks

and valleys, but that it is no ordinary hill is made evident by the four-faced towers.

The Bayon is, of course, not Hindu but Buddhist, and the general scheme of a square bottom and round top recalls the architectural plan of Borobudur and other stupas. The various carved faces are also identifiable as representations of the Bodhisattvas, the followers of Buddha who, although ready for Nirvana, delay their entry there in order to help others attain it. Mere identification of these enormous faces with their enigmatic smiles does not, however, explain their attraction and the impression they make on the visitor who, wherever he stands in the temple, feels himself to be under constant observation by these supernatural figures. Possibly these faces are not even aware of the presence of human visitors, being carried beyond the world of human desire by their mysterious, all-knowing meditations. But no matter how they are interpreted, they are a clever architectural device, for they stress the immensity of the Lord Buddha and the relative insignificance of human beings.

The consummate interest of the Bayon is not, however, the impressiveness of these towers, but the architectural scheme of the temple as a whole. At first glance it looks a mass of confusion, and one is immediately aware that it is the most complex of all the Angkor temples. Some authorities explain this confusion and complexity by saying that the present Bayon, built in the final quarter of the twelfth century, was superimposed on an older temple already there. There is considerable evidence to support this view, but it in no way detracts from the ingenuity exercised by its designer.

Like all Angkor temples, it is surrounded by an outer wall with four carved entrances. After an open space, one comes to the main façade. This is surmounted by five four-faced towers, of which the central one is taller than the others and reaches to a height of over 50 feet. The five towers rest on a gallery divided into three parallel corridors, of which both the outer and the inner are supported by pillars while the interior walls are decorated with rich carvings in bas-relief. The central corridor, illuminated by windows, runs directly under the great towers, and beneath each of them is a dark pavilion rising vertically into the tower and furnished below with doorways opening onto porches. The Khmer gallery, which is at its best at the Bayon and at Angkor Wat, is very narrow, since the keystone arch was either unknown or ignored by the builders. The arches are constructed merely by the piling up of blocks of stone, each one reaching a little more towards the center than the one below it, until they meet in a V. The open galleries paralleling the central corridor are supported both by columns and by horizontal beams that connect the columns with the interior wall of the gallery, thus leaving only a nar-



- The inner galleries built in the form of a cross with recessed corners. This first stage corresponds to a primary state of the central block of which only a fragment has been recovered.
- ▨ The four angles of the inner galleries commenced at the same level as the preceding galleries but at a later date.
- ▩ The outer galleries.
- The sixteen passages or chapels: which afterwards were intentionally demolished, and the two libraries.

FIGURE 5. *Architectural plan of Bayon Temple, Angkor Thom.*
(Courtesy of Penguin Books Ltd.)

row arch. Possibly this method of arch construction seriously limited the variety of the monuments at Angkor, but certainly the maze of corridors at the Bayon, all functionally necessary in supporting the sixteen massive towers of the outer section of the main block, demonstrates the most imaginative and highly developed use of this technique. The roofs of these galleries are also interestingly constructed, for they are made on the same principle as that of the fluted tile roof used so extensively in Germany and Holland. The difference at Angkor is that each "tile" is an enormous block of stone, fluted for purposes of drainage and support and fitted

exactly to its neighbors. It is an astonishing feat of masonry, for these outer galleries at the Bayon measure 650 yards in length.

Once having penetrated beyond the parallel galleries, one begins to feel the enormous complexity of the design of the Bayon. Between the interior gallery and the central rectangular block there is an extremely narrow space, less than a yard in width, which makes the interior gallery, itself richly carved, dark and gloomy. From this narrow space the central block rises steeply, and one can reach the upper terrace only by an almost vertical climb up steep steps to a height of perhaps 30 feet. In order better to determine the scheme of the temple it is necessary to ascend this terrace. There on a rectangle corresponding to the galleries below are twelve more four-faced towers which are constructed so as to appear somewhat taller than the outer towers.

It is at this point, however, that mathematical symmetry stopped and the individuality of the builders expressed itself. At the four corners of the central block are small squared indentations which leave room for small courts surrounded by galleries. Each of these galleries supports three additional four-faced towers, but these are not in line with the interior rows of towers. In addition, the four somewhat smaller towers which are placed beside the principal interior towers are neither arranged symmetrically nor placed to balance one another. The result is that instead of the rather dead symmetry and planned perfection of Angkor Wat, there is variety and originality at the Bayon. If one looks to the right, there may be a geometrical balance of five towers, but on the left there is a tower missing, and the neatness is destroyed. Looking down over the naga balustrade, one will see not rigid order but a maze of columns and angles created by the temple gallery. This quality of the unexpected, of an art that is spontaneous, is what makes the Bayon so interesting.

At the top of the massive many-towered central block is a wide platform around which one can walk. It is a more awe-inspiring experience than walking about the upper galleries of Borobudur partly because of the size of the towers of the Bayon and partly because of their human faces. In the center of this platform there rises an enormous circular tower with twelve rectangular entrances at the base which lead to the central sanctuary. Above these are false windows covered by wrought stone bars, and above them are eight carved faces. At the very top, some 220 feet from the ground, is a final tower, on each side of which is a gigantic smiling face cut into the stone. The effect of this central pinnacle of faces rising from the crowd of lower towers is to give a sense of immensity to the mystery already suggested by the enigmatic faces below. The whole gray mass, whose design is not so much

architectural as sculptural, is the most impressive symbol of the Buddha in Cambodia. Its appeal is not the purely abstract one of Borobudur, but it is a consciously and exquisitely contrived monument to Buddhism on a more human level. One might complain that the enigmatic faces are nothing but a somewhat cheap trick, created solely to impress and possibly to frighten the onlookers, but like the Mona Lisa, these faces are not obvious; they are benevolent rather than smug, and they suggest wisdom through meditation.

The carvings on the walls of the Bayon are also worth noticing. Perhaps they are not as finely executed as those of the Bantay Srei, but the figures of the Apsaras and the long friezes in the galleries show more skill and—what is more important—more vivacity and individual talent than many of those of Angkor Wat. One has the feeling that, like the workers in medieval Christian cathedrals, the artisans of the Bayon enjoyed their work and were keen to impress their personalities upon the stone, whereas at Angkor Wat they merely had a job to do—so many square yards of stone requiring appropriate decoration to fit in with the master plan.

The interior of the central tower, reached by any of the twelve entrances, has been called a disappointment, merely because it is so dark. Dark it certainly is, and one wonders exactly how the central figure of the Buddha which must have stood there under the tall conical vault could have been seen. Possibly there was artificial illumination; possibly some other technique now lost in the ruin was used to introduce light, but the very blackness of the interior with its intricate maze of corridors and chapels, introduces a sense of mystery to the place which would be lacking were it brightly lit. As one enters this final sanctuary, one is symbolically trying to go behind the enigmatic faces in order to understand their meaning. There is no reason why this mystery should be revealed immediately.

The Bayon, then, as the last really great monument built in Angkor, is the most baroque of all. Here, as nowhere else, imagination in decoration has been given its widest scope, and although there are obvious messinesses and mistakes in the design, more than any other temple it seems to symbolize the original spirit of Khmer art.

It is interesting to trace the development of this art, and one of the best places to begin is the temple of Bantay Samre, just beyond the village of Pradak, which is on the way to Bantay Srei. This temple has been dated as having been built between Angkor Wat and the Bayon, but because of the simplicity of its design and ground plan—in other words, on the basis of purely aesthetic judgment—it appears to be much older. In any event, it is a good temple to see early in one's visit because there, as perhaps in no other temple except the Bantay Srei, one can easily

discern its plan and pattern. With its plain brown laterite walls, it is almost severe. It is largely devoid of sculptural decoration except for its carved doorways, its windows faced with cylindrical stone bars, and its magnificent balustrade carved in the shape of giant cobras or nagas, all of which are typical features of Khmer art. Because of this simplicity one can gain an idea of the general plan adopted for many Khmer temples. After it, one can see (regardless of chronology) the efforts made to develop this technique—the combination of dramatic effect and luxurious decoration at Bantay Srei, the gigantic classical plan executed in Angkor Wat, and finally the wild and mysterious plan of the Bayon. In this way one can sense the extraordinary inventiveness of the Khmer people, who, despite the restrictions imposed by their lack of knowledge of the keystone arch, still carried out the techniques at their disposal to their utmost possibilities.

To mention only what seem to be the most interesting of the buildings at Angkor is perhaps unfortunately to obscure the grandeur of the place as a whole. The four-faced tower gates of Angkor Thom, the Elephant Terrace, and dozens of other temples should also be seen. But inevitably, unless one is merely gazing at a place like Angkor for diversion, one must concentrate on a few spots and through them try to reach some conclusions about the place as a whole—both as a present-day ruin and as a proof of a society that once existed.

The two are of course closely allied, and the importance of Angkor to us is surely that very proof of history and that very presentation of truth. The historical approach is useful, but it can also open the dangerous triple doors of antiquarianism, easy moralization, and sentimentalism. In the first place, if one becomes keen to know more about the Khmer people, to study their artistic techniques, and to consider their political and economic policies, one is tempted to become more and more a specialist, to lose sight of wider implications in one's concern with details—in a word, to become a specialist or antiquarian. The more imaginative historian will, of course, try to apply his knowledge of details to more general problems raised by the civilization of Angkor. One inevitable question is why, after the building of the Bayon Temple, the Khmer empire so rapidly declined. Many sociological and political explanations can be put forward. One could say, for example, that a society in which everything was subordinated to one man, the king, and a society which exhausted itself in what may actually have been little more than the vain desire of a king to build monuments to his own magnificence, was bound to collapse, partly from physical exhaustion and partly because of a lack of spiritual leadership in the king himself. Yet as soon as one says that Jayavarman VII should have been more restrained and should have created a middle class, one realizes how

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fatuous and trite such moral or pseudohistorical judgments are, if for no other reason than that they are so lacking in understanding of human conditions and human nature.

If, then, historical and moral judgments about a place like Angkor are unsatisfactory, and if the antiquarian approach is satisfying for only a few specialists, what is the value of Angkor? Why should one go and see it?

An answer that takes the form of another question is simply to ask why one should see anything, and that is an answer which at least recognizes that people are either curious or they are not, a fact about which little can be done. But curiosity alone is not a sufficiently rewarding motive. Curiosity can imply a real interest in his fellow man on the part of the curious person, but it can also imply little more than the desire to gawk in an un-understanding way at the inhabitants of out-of-the-way places. Those who find curiosity only the first step towards knowledge and not a motive sufficient in itself normally try to make what they may see have some relevance and importance to their own lives. If, for example, they see an ancient ruin, they do not so much concern themselves with what it was like centuries ago as with what it is like today. This approach, though seemingly sensible, contains one very great danger.

Travelers of this sort who return, for example, from Angkor often speak with particular interest of the ruined temple called Ta Phrom. This temple, an enormous horizontal affair, has not been restored and remains very much in the condition it must have been in when it was discovered in the nineteenth century. All through it rise vines and trees whose roots have entwined themselves among the stones of the temple, and the building itself emerges almost murkily from the encircling jungle and the greenery that has covered it.

The appeal of Ta Phrom is very obvious. The visitor either romantically pictures himself as the discoverer and has the vicarious thrill of "recognition" by putting himself in the position of a nineteenth-century explorer, or he makes the even more banal remark that nature has taken revenge on the works of man and that "the gods make vain the works of human hands."

Now in fact, Ta Phrom is one of the least interesting, from an architectural point of view, of the Angkor ruins. It would therefore seem to follow that the person who admires Ta Phrom, or who is more impressed by it than he is by Angkor Wat or the Bayon, is merely being sentimental about Angkor.

Each of the methods of approach to Angkor mentioned above therefore has its danger. He who interests himself especially in the Khmers as people risks becoming an antiquarian or making superficial judgments, and he who wishes to consider the

ruins as contemporary buildings risks becoming a sentimentalist. The second manner of approach has one feature, however, which has some value, since it is probably less sterile than the first, and that is its emphasis on the ruins as they are. Most of what has already been written here about the three main temples has stressed their aesthetic aspects—the beauty of the carvings, the skill of the masonry, the cleverness of the architectural design. Angkor can be admired then, and is probably most safely admired, as a work of art on a very grand scale. In their original state, when all the statues were in perfect condition, when the long corridors were painted, and when pennants and flags draped the stonework, the monuments of Angkor were probably as spectacular as the present-day palaces of the kings of Siam and Cambodia, but it is unlikely that they were more beautiful than they are now as ruins. The Bantay Srei is a delightfully balanced building combining simplicity in overall design with complexity of detail. Its ground plan is dramatically laid out, and it is eminently suited to its purpose as a temple. The same can be said to a greater or lesser extent of Angkor Wat and the Bayon. In addition to the architecture, one admires especially in Angkor the great attention given to details—the beautifully carved pediments and doorways, the complex roof construction, the exquisite bas-reliefs. Now and again one may complain that much of this work is stylized or overly formal, but one cannot help noticing the extraordinary care, both physical and mental, with which these temples were built.

Aesthetic appreciation, then, seems to be the most satisfactory initial approach, since it avoids the pitfalls of the other methods and since it leads to a consideration of a most important aspect of Angkor, which is the inspiration that lay behind the building of the temples. At Borobudur and Prambanan it was noticed that the work that went into their construction was clearly the result of religious zeal. At Angkor the same inspiration prevails, for with few exceptions all the ruins are temples, everything else from the palaces of the kings to the houses of the population having long since perished. The fact that the houses were made of wood indicates a distinct point of view on the part of the population, since they felt that only the gods deserved houses of stone. What they cared about, and what has remained in ruins, is otherworldly. These ruins are not like those of Pompeii, where one day life suddenly stopped, to be revealed centuries later as a curio—interesting as a picture of the humdrum life of a rather sensual people but lacking in any really stirring quality. Rather they symbolize the desire of the ancient Khmers to do something quite useless, something from which they would have no material benefit, as a gesture, perhaps, of a people who could afford a generous act. The Khmers were men of artistic sensibilities who were interested in beauty not for its own sake but as a part

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of their religion. It can be claimed, of course, that some of the Angkor monuments, especially Angkor Wat, may be monuments as much to the greatness of the king as to the greatness of Vishnu, and certainly the somewhat corrupted inspiration of Angkor Wat is revealed in its lesser degree of beauty and spirituality. Still it is significant that Suryavaram II built a temple and not a vast royal residence like Versailles.

Angkor, then, has this value: it is a memorial to men who had sufficiently subdued their personal and petty desires in order to provide something unnecessary in material terms. It may be claimed that the people had nothing to do with it and they were merely ordered to build by the king, but the point is not lost, for Angkor still remains as a monument of their work; it remains where all else is lost. That may sound a simple lesson and something of an anticlimax to anyone looking for a really striking significance in Angkor, but together with the vast beauty of the place it is enough.

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ANGKOR

THREE · PAGAN

FOUR HUNDRED miles north of Rangoon in the sandy plain of central Burma are the remains of the ancient city of Pagan. Situated on a long barren curve of the Irrawaddy River, the ruins are now as desolate as the country round about, but once, eight or nine hundred years ago, Pagan was the great capital of the kings of Burma and one of the most important centers of Buddhism in the world. Of the many buildings once contained in this city, only the religious monuments have survived, for, as at Angkor, both the royal palaces and private dwellings were made of wood and have long since disappeared. Yet what remains still constitutes one of the largest archaeological sites in the world. Stretching eight miles along the east bank of the Irrawaddy and penetrating at least three miles inland, the area is covered with between four and five thousand pagodas. Since the ground is flat and almost devoid of trees and shrubbery, it is possible to see dozens of them in every direction, and the view from the roof of one of the larger temples reveals what is literally a forest of pagodas.

A seemingly endless vista of temples of all shapes and sizes extends away from the river. Many of the pagodas are in a state of partial ruin, so that only the brick foundations remain, but three or four of the larger ones, each as big as a European cathedral, still glitter in white and gold against the blue sky. These have not been restored but have simply been preserved over the centuries since their construction. The combination of these gleaming gold and white temples with the many gloomy red brick ruins, which look like charred stumps in a forest destroyed by fire,

PLATE 22. *Ananda Temple,
Pagan.*



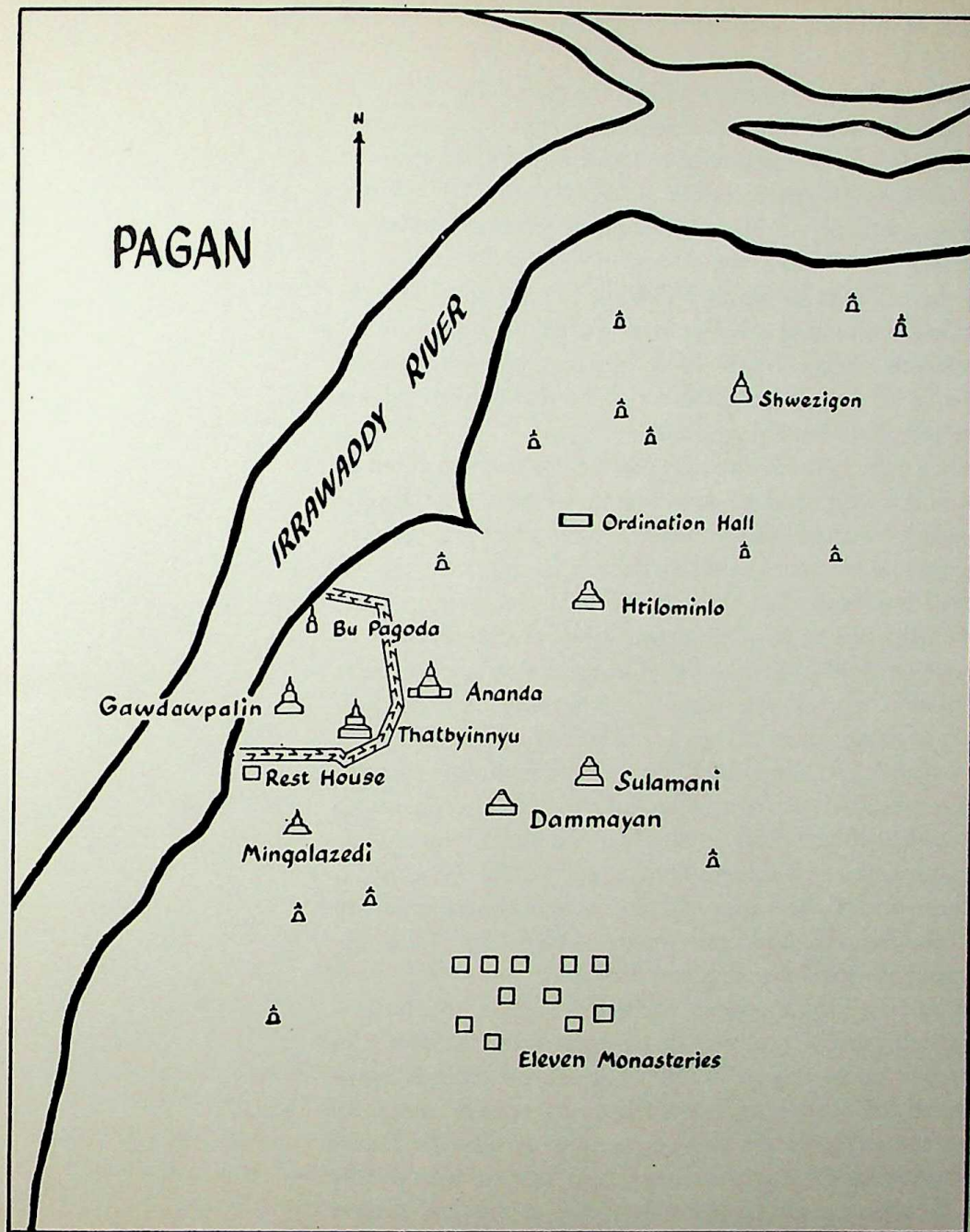


FIGURE 6. Map of Pagan.

gives Pagan its peculiar sense of still clinging to life seven hundred years after it was deserted.

The extraordinary variety of designs used in building the pagodas at Pagan is also immediately noticeable. Some with rounded domes are recognizable for their similarity to stupas in India and Ceylon; others have narrow spires like those in Siam; while the greatest of all, huge structures like wedding cakes, are original with the Burmese. Thus Pagan is the most complete museum of Buddhist architecture that exists in the world.

What Pagan must have been like at its zenith is difficult to envisage, and scant information exists concerning the centuries before it was attacked by the Great Khan at the end of the thirteenth century. Marco Polo, who called it by its Chinese name, Mien, described it as "a very great and noble city," but his account of the place emphasizes elements that have since disappeared:

"And in this city there is a thing so rich and rare that I must tell you about it. You see there was in former days a rich and puissant king in this city, and when he was about to die he commanded that by his tomb they should erect two towers, one at either end, one of gold and the other of silver, in such fashion as I shall tell you. The towers are built of fine stone; and then one of them has been covered with gold a good finger in thickness so that the tower looks as if it were all of solid gold; and the other is covered with silver in like manner so that it seems to be all of solid silver. Each tower is a good ten paces in height and of breadth in proportion. The upper part of these towers is round, and girt all about with bells, the top of the gold tower with gilded bells and the silver tower with silvered bells, insomuch that whenever the wind blows among these bells they tinkle. The tomb likewise was plated partly with gold and partly with silver. The King caused these towers to be erected to commemorate his magnificence and for the good of his soul; and really they do form one of the finest sights in the world; so exquisitely finished are they, so splendid and costly. And when they are lighted up by the sun they shine most brilliantly and are visible from a vast distance."

Impressionistically, Marco Polo's description is accurate insofar as it acknowledges the power of the place, but in the centuries that followed his visit, few who journeyed to Pagan bothered to remark on it. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to see it, some hundreds of years later, but virtually no records remain of their observations. So that, in modern terms, it is necessary to turn to the British agents accredited to the kingdom of Ava, as Burma was then known, who usually passed through Pagan on their way north to Mandalay. One of the first of these

was Michael Symes, a British colonel sent to Burma on behalf of the governor-general of India in 1795. Symes was evidently more interested in current affairs than in archaeology, for his comments on Pagan, or Pagahm as he calls it, occupy only a short page or two out of his three volumes of memoirs. "Leaving the temple of Logah-nundah," he writes, "we approached the once magnificent city of Pagahm. We could see little more from the river than a few straggling houses, which bore the appearance of having once been a connected street: in fact, scarcely anything remains of ancient Pagahm, except its numerous mouldering temples, and the vestiges of an old brick fort, the ramparts of which are still to be traced."

By 1827 a new emissary by the name of John Crawfurd was sent out from India. A more learned man than his predecessor, Crawfurd was nonetheless so imbued with the mission of empire and the clear superiority of the English over the Oriental that, although he noticed Pagan and recorded in some detail his explorations of the ruins, he was content to summarize his observations in these words:

"The vast extent of the ruins of Pagan, and the extent and splendour of its religious edifices, may be considered by some as proofs of considerable civilisation and wealth among the ancient Burmans; but I am convinced there is no foundation whatever for such an inference. The building of a temple among the Burmans is not only a work of piety, but the chief species of luxury and ostentation, in which those who have become possessed of wealth either by industry or extortion, are permitted to indulge; and at Pagan we have the accumulated labour of twelve centuries so expended."

It remained for Captain Henry Yule of the Bengal Engineers, who in 1855 acted as secretary to the ambassador from India, Major Phayre, to create the first sympathetic and understanding portrait of the country as seen by European eyes. "Pagan surprised us all," he says and, in the course of a whole chapter devoted to the ancient city, comments in this way with words a British officer must have found it difficult to use: "In these [temples] there is an actual sublimity of architectural effect, which excites wonder, almost awe, and takes hold of the imagination in a manner that renders apology for them as 'Burmese' absurdly out of place."

Few persons in subsequent years have commented on the place, since Pagan, unlike Angkor or even Anuradhapura in Ceylon or Borobudur in Java, is still one of the most difficult cities in the Orient to reach. For this reason it still has something of the aura of an altogether different world from our own. Indeed, the first impression the visitor receives at Pagan is that of being taken into a wonder world—a place of fantastic endeavor and fantastic execution, an immense monument to

the glory of the spirit. The vitality of this spirit is illustrated by the continuing desire of the Burmese, even in the difficulties of the present day, to gild and paint their pagodas at the expense of their own physical needs.

As one wanders among the temples, the vista continually changes, and new combinations of shape and color emerge. What is immediately striking in the area is its formlessness and lack of imposed plan, a feature caused by the way in which temple sites were selected. When a new temple was to be built, the reigning monarch released one of his white elephants and let it wander where it pleased in the city. The place where it finally came to rest was then chosen as the site for the new temple. This method prevented the imposition of an artificially geometric pattern upon the terrain. As a result, the general effect is pleasing, for from a ground plan that is without form rise monuments whose predominant characteristic is geometrical symmetry. Thus the panorama as a whole provides the variety and surprise so often lacking in the artificially calculated cities of the present day. A visit to Pagan would be useful for most modern city planners. Washington, Canberra, and New Delhi, with their formal landscaping combined with formal architecture, appear to be dead before they are completed, but Pagan, with its mixture of planning and chance, still lives.

The royal enclosure, a section of the city bordering on the Irrawaddy, was originally surrounded by a brick wall and moat, but even this wall was constructed in the shape of an irregular pentagon. The wooden palaces and houses of this inner city have long since disappeared, but a certain unifying feature still remains, and that is the close proximity to one another of three of the largest cathedral-like pagodas. Nearest to the river is the Gawdawpalin Pagoda, a large rectangular structure painted a light cream color and surmounted by a golden spire. A few hundred yards inland is another painted pagoda, the Thatbyinnyu Temple, which rises over 200 feet and is the tallest temple at Pagan. At approximately the same distance further on is the Ananda, the finest of all the temples at Pagan, glittering with white paint and topped by a huge golden tower and many lesser golden spires. These three provide a center for the present ruined site, and towards one or other of them the eye always returns.

Yet the extraordinary thing about Pagan is that when one climbs to the roof of one of these temples, one sees that they are but a small part of the whole site. A mile off to the right the Dammayan Pagoda looms up like a gigantic red hulk against the horizon. It is the largest of all the temples at Pagan but was never completed or painted. A mile beyond it are the somber ruins of eleven monasteries. To the left, three miles upstream, is the golden spire of the great Shwezigon Pagoda, one of the



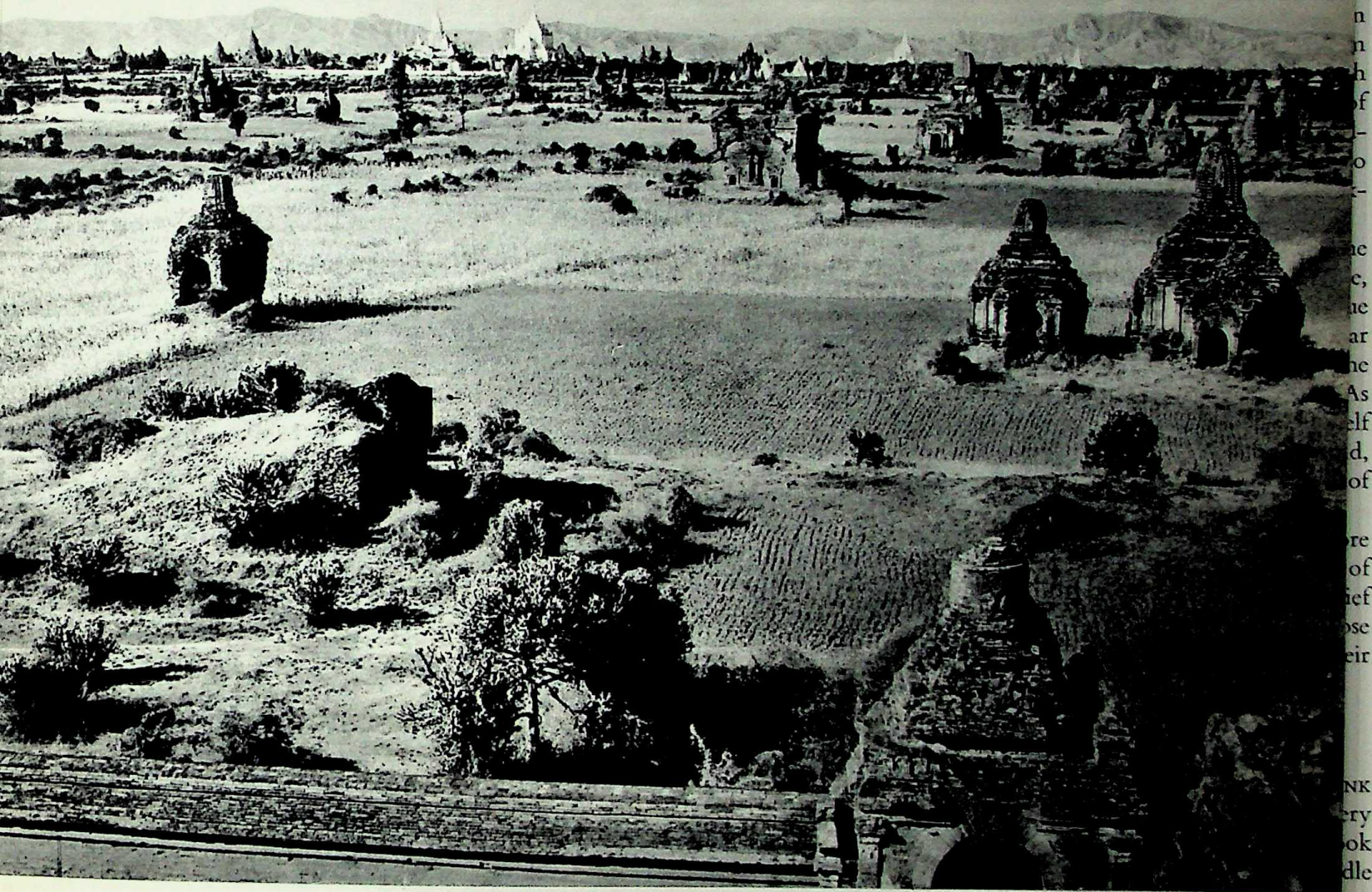
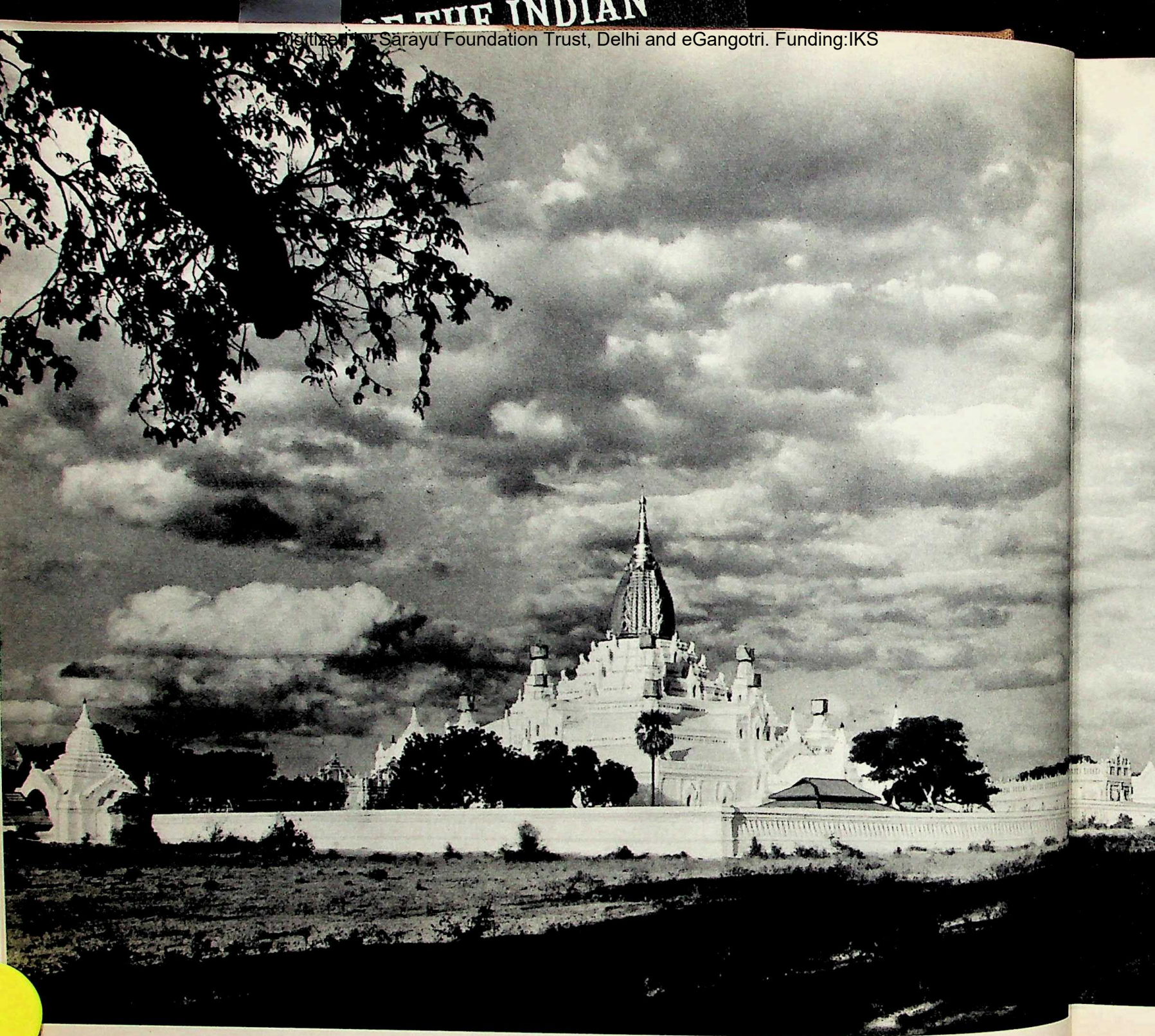


PLATE 23. *General view of Pagan from the east. Large white temples in distance are, left to right, Ananda, Thatbyinnyu, and Gawdawpalin. (Courtesy of the Asia Society, New York)*



Digitized by Sarayu Foun
PLATE 24. *Ananda Temple,*
Pagan. (Courtesy of the
Asia Society, New York)

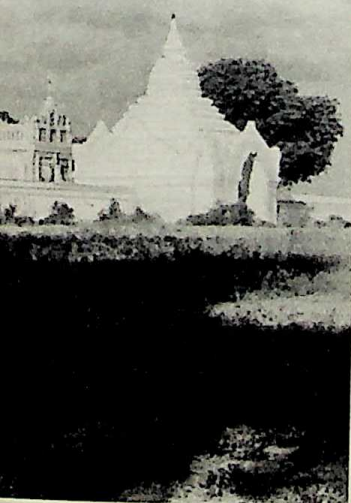


PLATE 25. *Standing Buddha,*
Ananda Temple, Pagan.

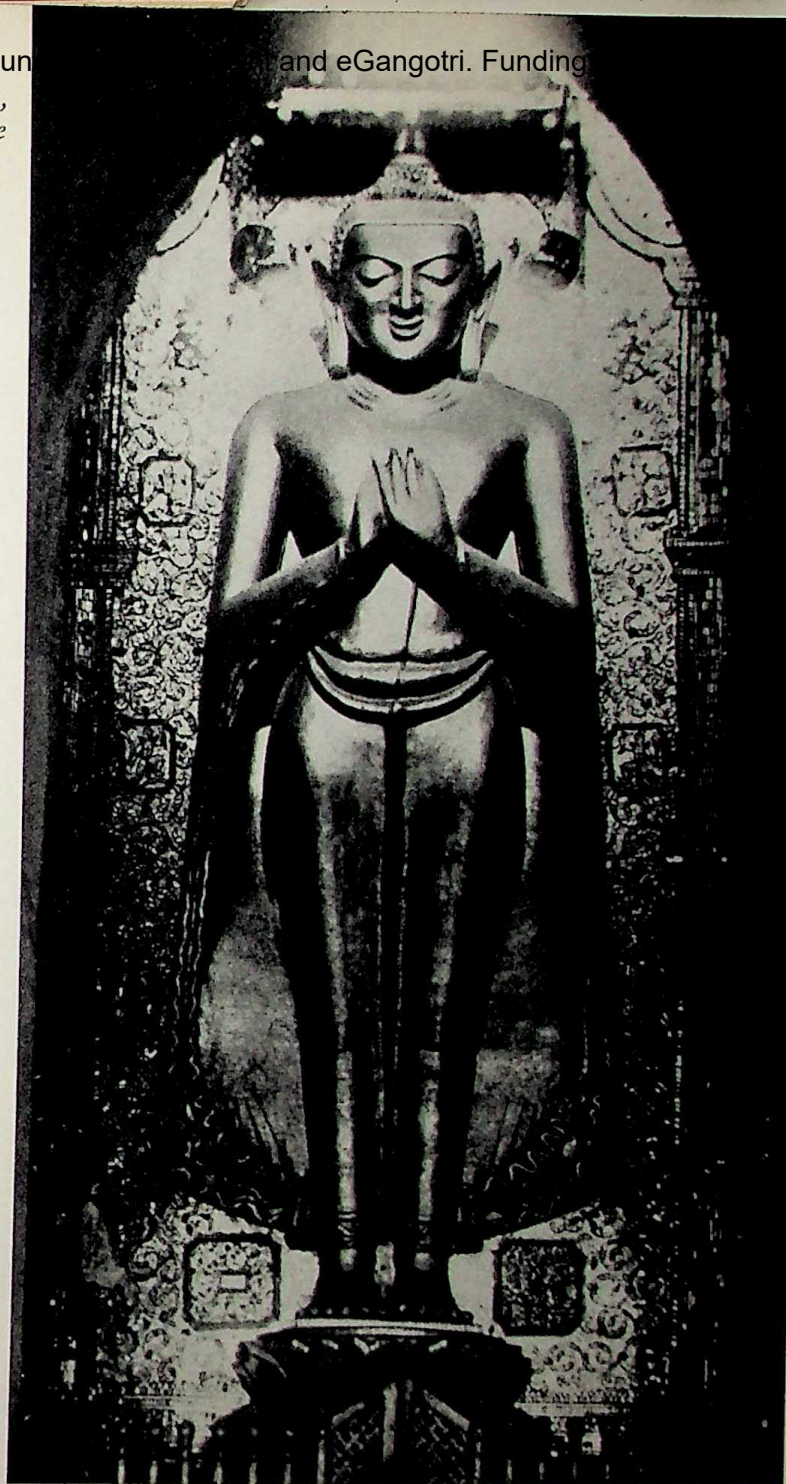






PLATE 27. *View of Thatbyinnyu from temple terrace, Pagan.*
(Courtesy of the Asia Society, New York)

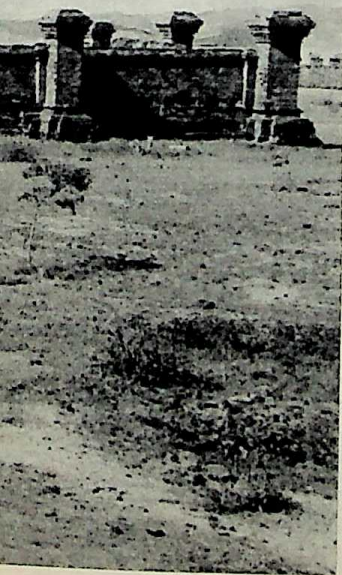


PLATE 26. *Mingalazedi Temple, Pagan.*
(Courtesy of the Asia Society, New York)



PLATE 28. *First interior corridor, showing niches, Ananda Temple, Pagan. (Courtesy of the Asia Society, New York)*

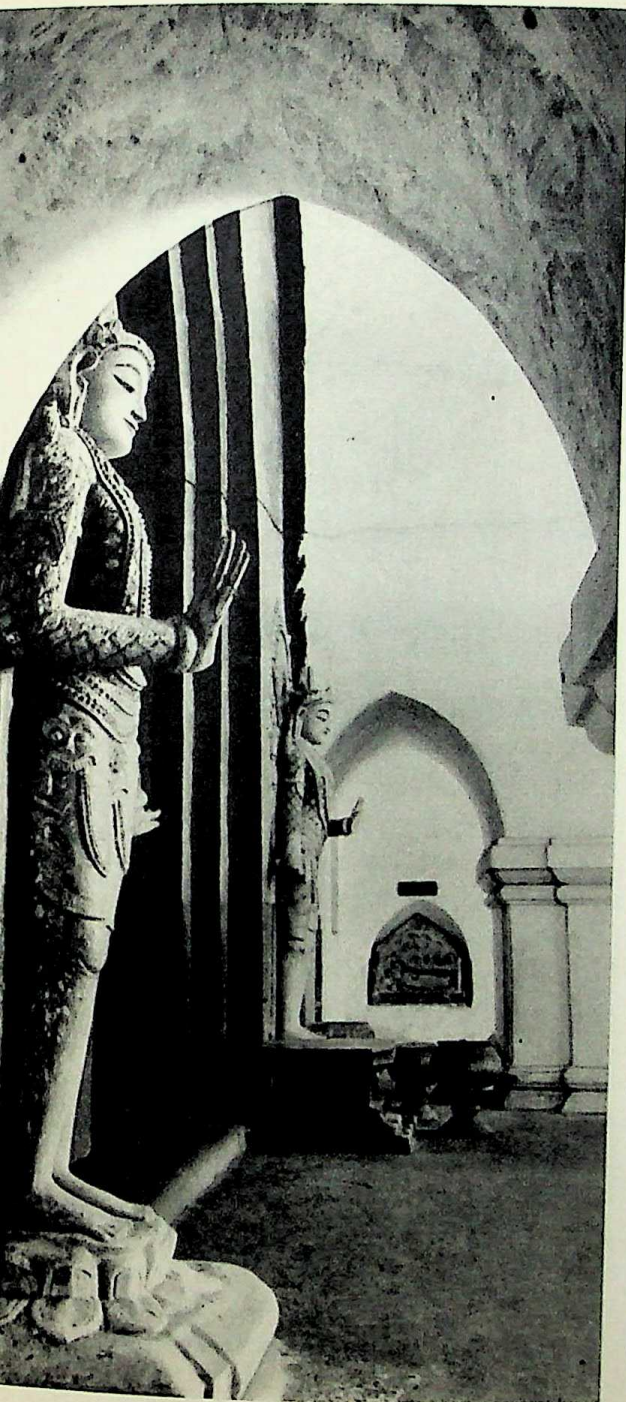


PLATE 29. *Dancing guardian figures at entrance to inner shrine, Ananda Temple, Pagan. (Courtesy of the Asia Society, New York)*



PLATE 30. *General view of Pagan from terrace of Gawdawpalin Pagoda.*

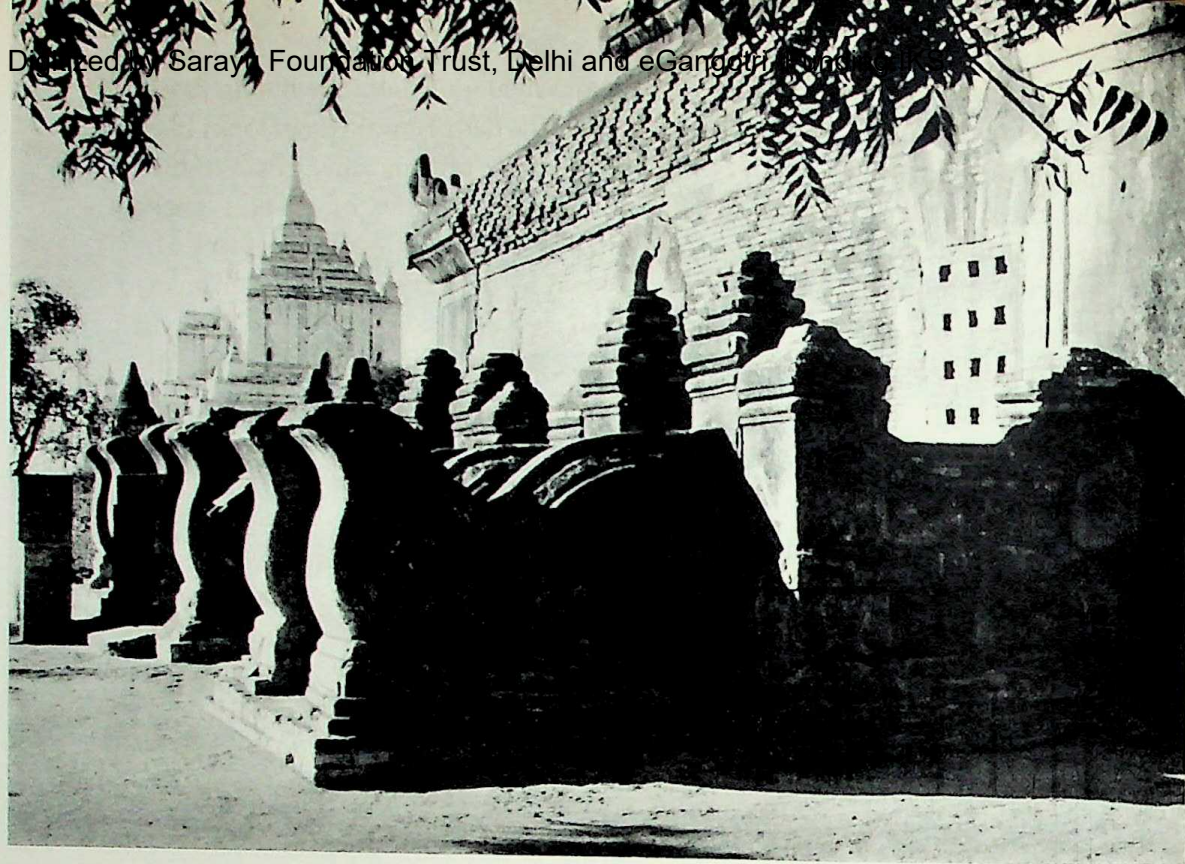


PLATE 31. *Thatbyinmyu Temple, Pagan.*



PLATE 32. *Ruins of brick Buddha, Pagan.*

holiest of all Burmese temples, and in between and in all directions are hundreds of other temples, of different sizes and shapes, so that the flat plain of Pagan looks like a huge harbor filled with the navies of the world. The present unity given to the site by the three white temples is, of course, largely a matter of chance, since originally all of the temples were painted white or covered with gold or silver leaf. At its height Pagan must have been a host of gleaming towers stretching over miles of green plain, a royal city without equal in the world.

For centuries Pagan was a center, and it was a capital long before recorded history, having been founded in the second century A.D. During the first nine hundred years of its existence, however, it probably did not develop beyond being a fortified village, containing only one or two small pagodas, and following a religion that was part animism and part Buddhism. Not until the reign of King Anawrahta, who ruled from 1044 to 1077, did Pagan begin to emerge as a great city. At that time, the great Shwezigon Pagoda, a round golden-domed stupa with an elongated spire, was founded. Next to the Shwedagon in Rangoon, this temple is the most holy pagoda in Burma, for it is reputed to contain the collarbone, a tooth, and the forehead of the Buddha. Scattered about the terrace of the pagoda are a number of shrines dedicated to *nats*, those animistic deities who were worshipped before the coming of Buddhism and who have subsequently been incorporated with Buddhism in Burma. The temple itself, with its four entrances, each guarded by a pair of huge *chinthies* or Burmese lions, is kept in good repair, and only recently long corridors of cement and steel have been constructed as part of the entrances. The dome and the chapels around its base are kept brilliantly gilded.

In keeping with tradition, the site of the Shwezigon was chosen by placing the tooth of the Buddha in a jeweled casket on the back of a white elephant and letting the animal roam. King Anawrahta unfortunately did not live to see the completion of his temple, and it was finished by Kyanzittha, his nephew, who ruled the kingdom of Pagan during its golden age. To hasten the construction of this temple, the new king caused a chain of men to be stretched from the building site to the quarry at Tuywin Hill, over seven miles away, and thousands of slabs of stone, each as big as a case of whisky, were passed from hand to hand along the double row of men over the distance. The Shwezigon is one of the few temples at Pagan made of stone, the majority being constructed of brick.

The use of a human chain might suggest that slave labor was used in the building of temples at Pagan, but in fact the religious zeal of the populace was so great that they willingly collaborated with the royal designs. Thanks to this voluntary enthusiasm, some temples were built in as short a period as seven months. Only

one king ever used slave labor, but he was assassinated and his temple was never completed. The Burmese kings were of course renowned for their cruel autocracy in other ways, and even down to modern times their reigns were disfigured by massacre and bloodshed. But the lot of the common man was then probably no worse than it is today. Possibly it was even better, since the result of his labor was always visible to him afterwards.

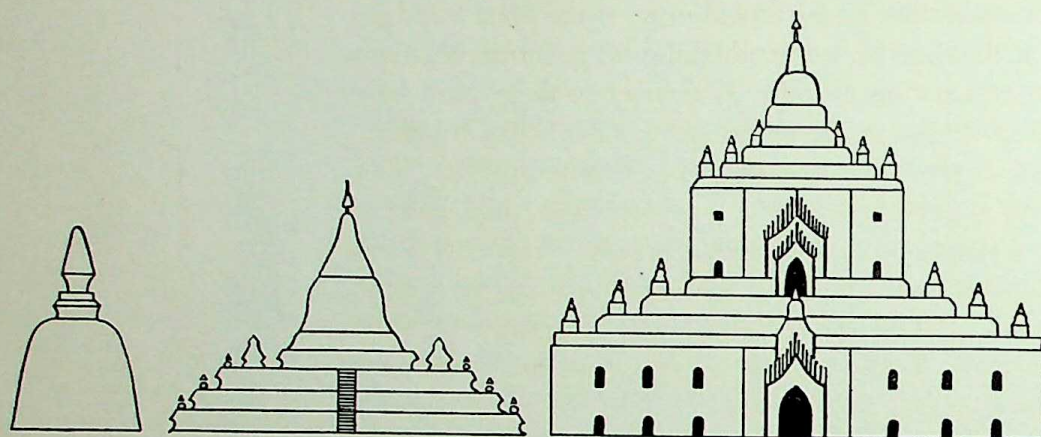


FIGURE 7. *Pagoda development at Pagan.*

The earliest temples built at Pagan were inspired by those of Ceylonese design, and were constructed in the same shape as the ancient *dagobas*, as pagodas are called in Ceylon, that are still visible at Anuradhapura. The basic pattern is the same: the base of the structure is low and square and is designed to represent the cloak of the Buddha. Upon it is built a rounded dome symbolizing the beggar's bowl, while from its apex rises a small spire that stands for the Buddha's umbrella. In general, these Sinhalese pagodas are squat in shape, the round portion rising almost vertically from a low base and curving inwards only towards the top. The spire or *htie* is also short, little more than a knob. Thus the pagoda of Ceylon most closely resembles an inverted coffee cup. At Pagan there are several examples of this type of pagoda, of which the most famous is the second-century Bu Pagoda, which is built on the river bank and serves as a landmark for travelers.

A certain amount of variation was possible while still keeping within the limitation of this basic pattern, but gradually the Burmese artists, like the Siamese further to the east, began to alter the shape itself, elongating the rounded bowl section so that it would look less solid and dumpy and increasing the height of the spire.

Early pagodas of this style, like the Shwezigon, were bell-shaped, but later on even thinner and taller pagodas that resembled inverted onions were built.

Pagoda architecture had more or less reached this stage during the early part of the reign of Kyanzittha, the greatest of the kings of Pagan. Although his rule began with bloodshed when he seized the throne at the death of his weaker brother, he afterwards maintained the kingdom in peace. Kyanzittha was an extremely religious person, and to his inspiration must be attributed most of the great buildings at Pagan. It happened that at the time he was establishing his government, many Buddhists were fleeing from persecution in India. A number of them must have heard of the famous Buddhist center at Pagan, for they soon began to arrive. Among those who came were eight Indian monks from the state of Orissa who, being welcomed by Kyanzittha, gave him over a period of time the benefit of their teaching. One day, having told him of their own great cave temple of Ananta in the hills of Orissa, they suggested that he build one like it at Pagan to demonstrate his devotion to the Lord Buddha. So delighted was Kyanzittha with this proposal that he commissioned the monks to draw up the plans, and so the great Ananda Temple was started.

The study of architecture, like that of history, continually reveals the astonishing power of individual genius. At Pagan, one would have expected that the first temple built in a new style would be experimental, that it would contain a number of imperfections, and that only later, as the style took root, would the really great temples be built. But in fact the Ananda, the first of the new style and the prototype of subsequent temples, is so superior to those built afterwards that one can only conclude that among the eight Buddhist monks was one who was an architectural genius. The only other way to explain the superiority of the Ananda would be to blame the later architects for copying too much and for being too conservative in their own experimentation. In any event, whatever the historical cause, the Ananda is the first and finest of the Pagan temples built in the Indian style.

What exactly this style consists of may perhaps be made plain by saying that the traditional concept of the Buddhist pagoda was here altered to include Hindu features. Originally a pagoda was not a temple which was entered, like a Christian church, for the purpose of worship, but was a solid fortress in which sacred relics could be preserved. The Hindu temple, on the other hand, was designed as a house or palace where a god could reside if he chose to do so.

To combine these two notions posed a problem: either the solid pagoda had to be hollowed out or an open building had to be constructed that somehow preserved the symbolic features of the Buddhist pagoda. Since the Burmese of the

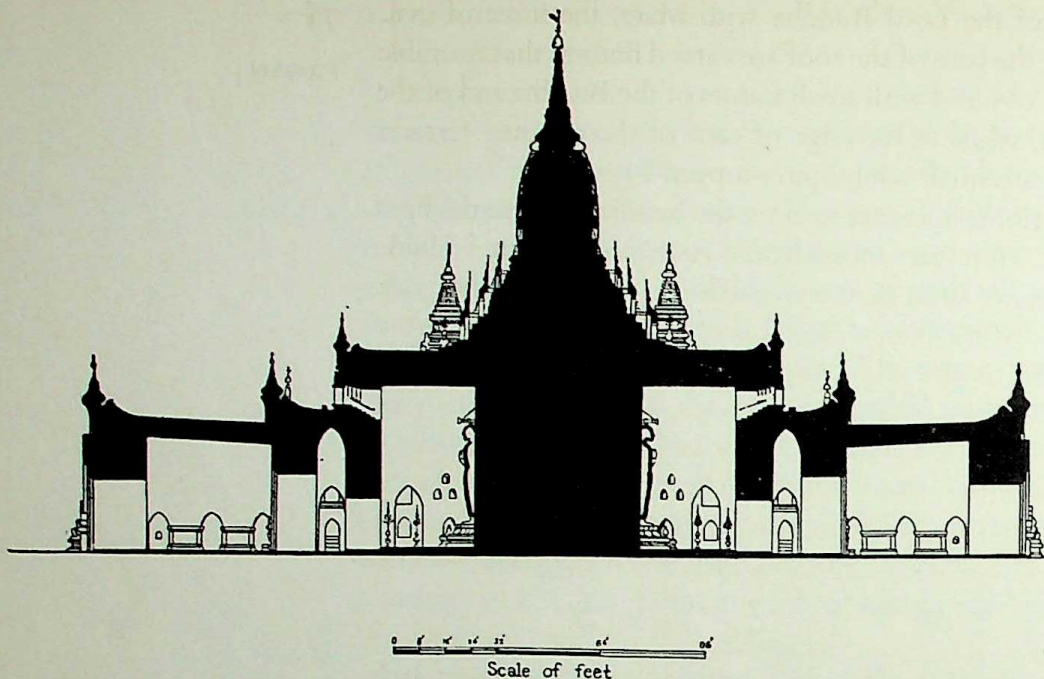


FIGURE 8. Architectural plan of Ananda Temple. (Courtesy of "A Pictorial Guide to Pagan")

eleventh century did not possess enough engineering skill to build a hollow dome, they adopted the second method. By increasing the height of the pagoda's rectangular base, they converted the lower portion of the structure into an open temple and then built the solid stupa on top of the roof.

This architectural pattern was in effect what the Indian monks suggested to Kyanzittha. The Ananda Temple is therefore rectangular at the base and has four entrance passages which convert the square into a Greek cross. This portion of the temple is 62 feet high on the exterior and 50 feet in the interior. The roof of the structure rises in the form of receding terraces, and these in turn are surmounted by the tower. At this point another Hindu feature was adopted, for the main section of the tower resembles the curvilinear beehive towers of many Indian temples, and only the top spire follows the elongated Buddhist form with a golden umbrella on top. This heavy stone roof and the tower are supported by a solid pillar of brick over 50 feet thick.

As the temple is approached from the courtyard, its white walls and golden tower gleam brilliantly in the sunlight. Along the base runs a frieze of glazed terra

cotta depicting the struggles of the Lord Buddha with Mara, the force of evil. Over the doorways and along the base of the roof are carved flutings that resemble white flames. The roof itself is covered with small statues of the Buddha and of the Burmese lions called chinthes, while at the edge of each of the receding terraces and on the turrets of the roof are small white spires topped by gold.

After the dazzle of the exterior it is a relief to enter the building, where the light is more relaxed and diffused. Here one immediately encounters another Hindu element in the temple. In general, since they are designed as houses for the gods, Hindu temples contain statues of the deities placed here and there in the interior. The Buddhists, on the other hand, normally place their images of the Buddha in small shrines outside of the solid stupa. In the Ananda, however, these statues are placed in the interior. All along the walls of the first interior corridor are hundreds of small niches cut in different shapes and containing statues of seated Buddhas or wooden plaques illustrating in bas-relief scenes from Buddha's life. Here too the color scheme is gold and white, for the walls are whitewashed and the statues are covered with gold leaf.

The difficulty that arises from having statues in the interior is the way in which they are to be illuminated. In so early a temple as the Ananda one might have expected that this problem would have received only perfunctory treatment, yet one of the glories of this temple is its lighting system, which is far more subtle than anything found at Angkor. Around the thick central pillar or block of the building run two sets of tall galleries 80 feet long on a side. Their primary function is to admit light to the interior. The outer corridor is illuminated partly by a system of twenty-four alternating windows and door passages and partly by two stories of windows at each of the four corners of the structure. The interior corridor is lower than the outer, but there is still sufficient light by which to see the statues in the niches that decorate its walls. Some of the light in this gallery comes in through the four main entrance passages, and the rest comes through a series of waist-high windows, sixteen in all, which are cut through the ten-foot-thick wall into the outer corridor.

Gradually, as one penetrates into the Ananda, the light has been diminishing, and it is now time to enter one of the four chapels built against the walls of the central block. On either side, the entrance is guarded by a life-sized statue of a dancer dressed in the court costume of ancient Pagan. The sanctuaries themselves are small, but each one contains a large statue of the Buddha, who stands with his right arm raised in the gesture of teaching. These statues are over 30 feet tall, and each is thickly coated with gold leaf.

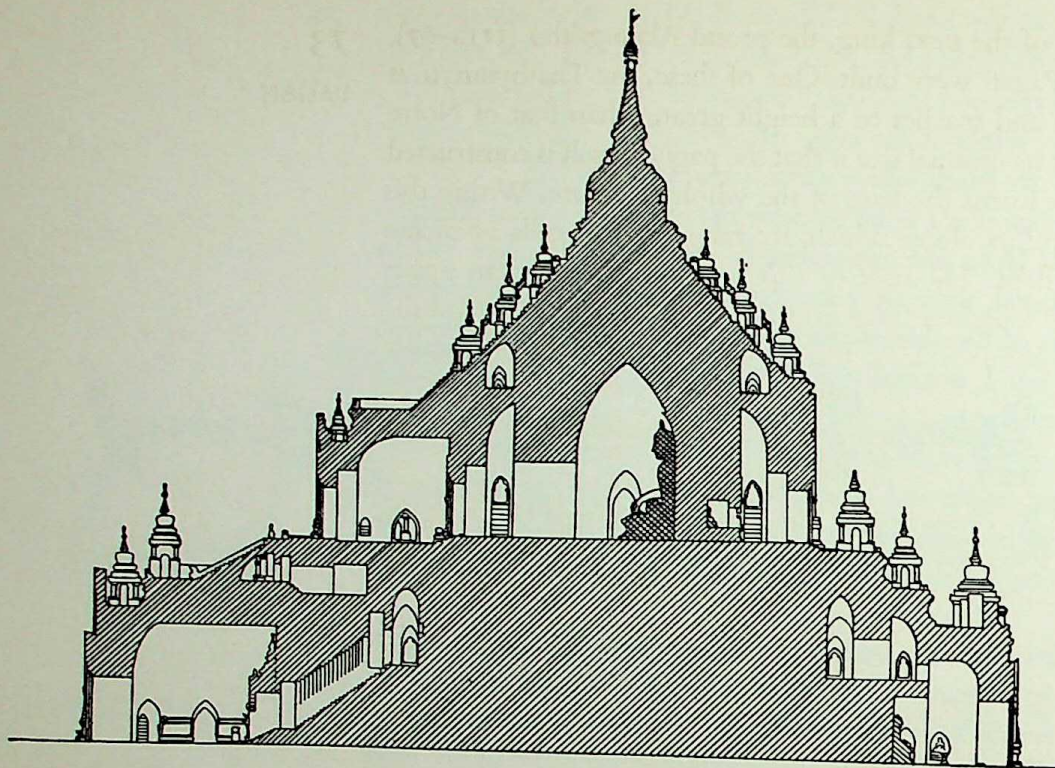


FIGURE 9. *Architectural Plan of Thatbyinnyu Temple.*
(Courtesy of "A Pictorial Guide to Pagan")

Since the chapels are built deep into the interior of the temple, where light does not easily penetrate, one might expect them to be dark and gloomy, but here the technique of lighting in the Ananda is most skillfully employed. A certain amount of light naturally floods in towards the base of the statues from the four main entrance passages, which are unobstructed by the colonnade of the corridors. At the same time, the vaulting of the sanctuary is so high that the upper portion of the statue would be invisible were it not for an aperture cut into the roof above that throws a shaft of light onto the Buddha's face. The lower light is diffused, but the upper light is direct and therefore dramatically emphasizes the benign face of the golden figure.

The Ananda Temple, built in A.D. 1091, is the greatest achievement of Pagan. It would be a mistake, however, to say that no further development took place in the art of temple building after the death of Kyanzittha and the completion of the

Ananda, for during the reign of the next king, the proud Alaungsithu (1112-67), two of the finest pagodas at Pagan were built. One of these, the Thatbyinnyu, is the tallest building at the site and reaches to a height greater than that of Notre Dame in Paris. One reason for its unusual size is that the pagoda itself is constructed on top of a monastery which forms the base of the whole structure. Within this base are two concentric corridors along which are ranged small cells or niches where the monks lived and slept. The roof of this base, which forms an upper gallery, is reached by a pair of staircases from ground level that help to extend the building and provide an impressive entrance. On the upper gallery is raised another rectangular structure with a tiered roof and spire. Inside it is a seated image of the Buddha 32 feet tall. In the upper roof there is even an additional story that was once used as a library, and in the tower are the sacred relics.

By eliminating the central block, as in the Ananda, the architects of the Thatbyinnyu were able to place the statue of the Buddha in the exact center of the building. But despite this improvement, the temple as a whole is less satisfactory than its predecessor. Massive and impressive, it is also somehow crude and unsubtle.

Alaungsithu built another smaller temple, the Swegugyi, which is a more direct copy of the Ananda, and on this building he raised an inscription that helps to explain the motives for the construction of many of the temples at Pagan.

By this my gift, whatever boon I seek,
It is the best of boons, to profit all;
By this abundant merit I desire
Here nor hereafter no angelic pomp
Of Brahmas, Suras, Maras; nor the state
And splendors of a monarch; nay, not even
To be the pupil of the Conqueror.
But I would build a causeway sheer athwart
The river of Samsara, and all folk
Would speed scross thereby until they reach
The Blessed City. . . .

In his old age, Alaungsithu became feeble and decrepit. When almost unconscious he was moved from the palace to the Swegugyi, where he was murdered by his son Narathu, whose career is curiously similar to that of the Scottish lord Macbeth. When Narathu's brother, Minshinzaw, heard of the murder, he marched on Pagan to avenge the deed and become king himself. Narathu became frightened

and agreed to abdicate, but the night after the coronation of the new king, Minshinzaw died from a poisoned dish, and Narathu resumed the throne.

He soon found, however, that the kingship was not a gentle burden: the courtiers stayed away, and he was usually alone. Irritated by his isolation, he began to persecute the clergy and even had his queens and kinsmen murdered. At last, however, he became remorseful and decided to make up for his evil behavior by building a new temple, the Dammayan, which signifies "the rays of truth." It was to be patterned after the Ananda but, in accordance with Narathu's nature, was to be the largest temple in all of Pagan.

So afflicted was Narathu by his conscience that he hurried his workers through the monsoons and through the heat of midday in order to complete the great work. To get the job done quickly he employed slave labor and thus became the only king ever to do so during the many centuries of the Pagan dynasty. At the same time he was impatient of imperfection and executed his master masons if he saw a flaw in their work.

The end was probably inevitable, but the versions of Narathu's death vary. Some say he was assassinated by his own workmen during an inspection tour of the temple; others say that eight of the royal guards, disguised as Brahmins, entered the palace announcing that they wished to give Narathu their blessings, but that when he sat down among them, they drew knives from their robes and murdered him, afterwards committing suicide themselves because they had killed a consecrated king.

Whatever the exact details of Narathu's story, his character is reflected in the work of the huge gloomy temple that stands at some distance to the southeast of the Ananda. At the king's death, work stopped, and the building was never completed. Today it remains a huge pile of brick masonry, here and there decorated with designs in mortar. Its high corridors are dark and dreary, and the workmanship is decidedly inferior to what is found in temples built by volunteer labor.

The next important king of Pagan was Narapatisithu, a son of Narathu, who ruled until A.D. 1210. A strong king, he established a powerful royal guard and opened commerce with Ceylon. Part of this commerce was religious, and Narapatisithu arranged for the first pilgrimage from Burma to Ceylon. Diplomatic, commercial, and religious relations between the two countries underwent their difficulties, but as a result of the king's willingness to widen his horizons, two of the finest temples at Pagan were built—the Gawdawpalin, which today makes up the third of the three painted temples that provide a center for the site, and the Sulamani, a large temple not far from Narathu's ill-conceived Dammayan. The

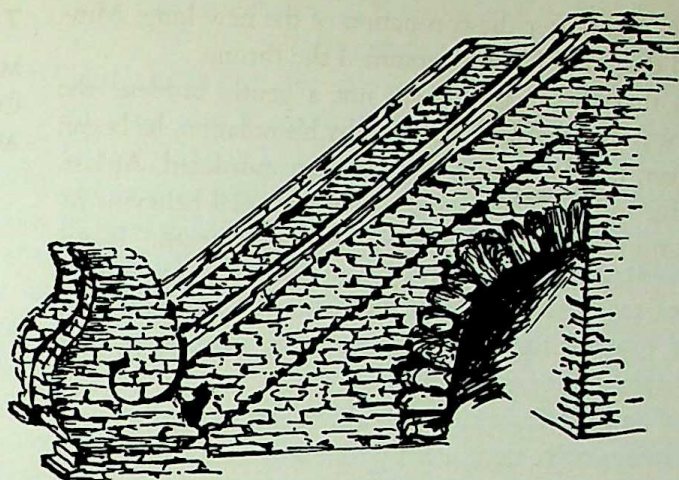


FIGURE 10. *Brick staircase
at Sulamani Pagoda.*

Gawdawpalin is, in fact, a smaller version of the Thatbyinnyu, except that it lacks a monastery. Situated near the river, it is kept in good repair, its walls painted a light cream color and its spire brightly gilded.

The Sulamani contains various important features of the art of Pagan, and here brick masonry can be seen at its best. The bricks of which the temple is constructed are so carefully and precisely laid that it is impossible to insert a knife blade between any two of them. Presumably the Ananda has as fine masonry, but it cannot be seen because of the plaster. At the Sulamani, however, the plaster has worn away, revealing the bricks beneath. On the upper story there is also a frieze of glazed terra-cotta work. The tiles are turquoise and yellow, and their colors seem as bright as they were eight hundred years ago when the temple was built.

The Sulamani is also noted for the fresco paintings with which the interior corridors are decorated. In most of the other temples at Pagan these paintings have disappeared, and at the Sulamani only fragments remain. The frescoes on the ground floor are later productions, the work of eighteenth-century monks, but some of the original work may still be seen on the upper story, especially on the ceiling and under the arches. Most of the paintings are of geometric designs, but their red and blue colors have remained firm through the ages.

Frescoes are found in other parts of Pagan as well, and one of the more interesting of these places is the Ordination Hall, a thirteen-century building not far from the Htilominlo Pagoda. This low rectangular building was used for the ordination ceremony of Buddhist priests, and covering its walls and ceilings are paintings in

a very fresh state which tell of the life of Buddha. It is said, however, that these frescoes date only from the seventeenth or eighteenth century.

The last of the great temples at Pagan is the Htilominlo, which, like the Sulamani, is based on the Ananda and has superlative brickwork. It was built by Nantaungmya to celebrate his selection as king. What happened was that one of Narapatisithu's lesser wives, the daughter of a gardener, was anxious to have her son succeed to the throne, and she begged the king to arrange for a trial among all of his sons. The king agreed, and the great white umbrella, symbol of royal power, was then set up in the midst of the candidates. Whether it was a stratagem or a miracle, the umbrella inclined towards the son of the gardener's daughter, and Nantaungmya was chosen to become the next king.

To judge from the Sulamani and the Htilominlo, this architectural period was characterized not so much by imaginative design as by excellent artisanship. The cement and plaster mouldings of the two-storied Htilominlo clearly demonstrate this concern. The designs, mostly of geometric patterns, are executed with precision, but there is little variety among them. Thus, with Nantaungmya, architecture of a high quality came to an end at Pagan. Even in his reign a decline is perceptible, for the Htilominlo does not make use of the lessons learned by earlier temple builders and is therefore itself a regression. Furthermore, the other principal temple built by this king is a mere copy of the famous Bodhgaya Temple in India and is a lifeless imitation.

With the next king, the rot firmly set in. Narathihapati ruled for over thirty years, until 1287, but his reign was punctuated by military disaster and intrigue. He even dined with all of his sons lest any try to poison him. Indeed his eating capacity was considerable, for on the inscription in his temple, the Mingalazedi, he boasts of consuming three hundred dishes of curry in a day. The completion of this pagoda, a traditional solid pyramid topped by a bell-shaped stupa which is reached by four sets of staircases, was delayed over six years, since work on it was never continuous. These postponements seem to indicate a growing lack of the spiritual qualities in the gourmand king which in turn is probably a reflection of the state of his kingdom. In design and workmanship this temple is an inferior version of the eleventh-century Shwesandaw Pagoda, which was built by the first historical king, Anawrahta.

Three years after the completion of the Mingalazedi, the Tartar forces of Kublai Khan invaded Burma, and the kingdom of Pagan came to an end. What remained of Burmese authority now centered on Ava, a town just south of Mandalay, where it fell under the domination of the Shan princes. Never afterwards was Pagan the

national capital, but in being deserted it merely suffered the same fate as that of many other cities in Burma. Not infrequently have the Burmese changed their capital for astrological reasons, and Pegu, Shwebo, and Amarapura have all been national centers at one time or other. A more pressing reason for the departure from Pagan was the exhaustion of the land around the city. The Burmese knew nothing of rotation farming, and since the building of so many brick temples required wood for the kilns, they deforested nearly all of the area, with the result that the water no longer soaked into the soil. Today the country around Pagan is a barren waste with only a few scrub bushes growing in the hot sand.

The Pagan dynasty really collapsed because of the rigidity of its system of government—a system which did not change so long as monarchy existed in Burma and which made the country so easy a prey to British imperialism. Since the government was centered on one person and since the harem system provided many sons and therefore a large number of rival claimants to the throne, there was never the calm atmosphere at court essential for the establishment of what now would be called a civil service. In addition, the tradition of mass murder of royal princes made the development of a strong and loyal government impossible. Even as late as 1878, upon the accession to the throne of Thibaw, the last of the Burmese kings, some seventy of his brothers and sisters were executed by royal command lest any of them start a faction against the king.

Pagan, then, as a part of Burmese history, reflects the strange mixture of brutality and spirituality that is found in many parts of the East. The Ananda Pagoda is one of the great religious monuments of the world; yet, in keeping with tradition, Kyanzittha executed the architect on the day the temple was dedicated.

What Pagan means to modern Burma is difficult to say. When it was the national capital, Burma was, in medieval terms, a great nation, and Pagan was a greater city than any in Europe. But after the Middle Ages the West progressed into the modern age while the East marked time. Asia has never had a renaissance or a reformation or an age of reason, and it is only today, now finally released from colonial domination, that it is emerging from the Middle Ages. In its excitement at this new era, it is naturally trying to leap over the intervening centuries and to go even further into the future than Western Europe or America has gone. Hence the attraction of socialism and even communism for many in the East. Yet it is difficult to make a jump of seven or eight centuries, and as a result the religious and spiritual elements are still very strong. A compromise therefore emerges that is seen in the attempts of the Burmese prime minister U Nu to weld together Buddhism and socialism, as Sukarno of Indonesia tries to mix socialism and Islam,

Since the world has reached the point where the materialism of the West offers no better solutions to modern problems than isolated spiritualism does in the East, the result of this compromise is of extreme importance for mankind.

In the meantime Pagan, with its thousands of red and white pagodas rising up from the barren earth, stands as a symbol of one aspect of this new development, for the most forceful impression received upon visiting the site is that of the religious fervor that brought it into existence. It is the same spiritualism or idealism that has erected lasting monuments elsewhere, whether they be at Angkor or Chartres, and even today, as Burma emerges from the past, these monuments play an important role in the life of the country.

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AGES

FOUR · HINDU TEMPLES OF SOUTH INDIA

THE INFLUENCE of Hindu ecclesiastical art and architecture is widespread in southeast Asia, and almost everywhere, whether in Indonesia or on the Indo-Chinese peninsula, there is evidence that Indian artists have been there or at least have had disciples there. The Prambanan and Borobudur ruins in Java, Angkor in Cambodia, and Pagan in Burma all show Indian influence, and as one sees these places one becomes more and more at home with Indian art without ever having been in India.

When, therefore, one finally arrives in India one expects the so-called shock of recognition, the feeling that here, at last, is the true source, the pure stream of Hindu art. Unfortunately, if one proceeds, shall we say, south along the eastern coast of India from Calcutta to Madurai, one finds not so much a sign of the unity of Indian art—a style in the sense of a Greek or Roman style—but a bewildering profusion of designs. The temples alone appear to have been built in all styles, sizes, and shapes; some have tall towers, others have none; some have huge gates, others have none. The effect is as confusing as it would be to drive through the city of Oxford and be told that the colleges are all examples of English architecture.

The point is, of course, that like most other architectures, the Hindu developed over the centuries, so that although there are certain qualities that are similar in an old and a new temple, in general they are quite different. Unfortunately, little of this is made plain to the visitor. He is merely told that certain temples are “much older” than others, or that the temples of Mahabalipuram are of the seventh cen-

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tury A.D. while those of nearby Kanchipuram are not so old, dating mostly from the fifteenth or sixteenth century.

Unless he makes a point of keeping the historical sequence in mind and of mentally equating one style with a historical period, the visitor will probably be confused by what he sees—and also probably irritated that he cannot make clear distinctions.

The only solution to this difficulty seems to be to analyze and to clarify the characteristics of the various temples. Acting solely on visual evidence and without the aid of textbooks, one doubtless risks making errors. Nevertheless, by keeping a sharp eye out for dates, one can assemble what is at least a plausible picture of the development of Hindu architecture. For this study, the chronological method has obvious advantages.

Temple architecture in India seems to have two sources, both derived from the Buddhists and the Jains. Both of these religions are of course still alive, and both are offshoots of the parent Hinduism. There is, however, virtually no evidence of pre-Buddhist or pre-Jain Hindu temples. Doubtless the worshippers of Siva and Vishnu had places for their rites—indeed we know of similar places used by the Jains and Buddhists of the second century B.C. at the Udayagiri cave temples not far from Bhubaneshwar and at Ellora and Ajanta near Bombay. These caves are partly natural formations and partly hollowed out by men, and it seems likely that they, or similar caves elsewhere, were the first sort of Indian temples. It is possible, of course, that the early temples were also built in the flat sections of India, and it is probable that they were made of wood, for there are no remains of these anywhere. In any event, the cave fits in well with the early Hindu notion that the gods lived in a mountain, Mount Meru, since caves most frequently appear in mountains.

The early cave temples constitute the basis of Hindu architecture, and a number of their characteristics are found in later temples. Naturally the scope of the architect is limited in a cave: he can do some hollowing out and create an interior dome, but he must concentrate his decoration on the columns at the mouth of the cave. This is precisely what these prehistoric artists did, and later Hindu temples frequently have domed interiors and elaborately carved columns. More important, however, is the use of stone carving in relief, which apparently originates in these caves, since they are especially suitable for it. Carving in stone—whether in statues or in panels of relief—has been a feature of virtually all Hindu temple art, and although it was developed to an extraordinary degree of intricacy, it probably

first began in the crude carvings found in the interior of the early cave temples.

This is the principal heritage of early cave architecture. The next stage in the development of Hindu temple architecture came at a time when the Buddhists were being forced from the country into Burma or Ceylon—at a time, in other words, when Hinduism was once again militant and strong. In the centuries preceding this important seventh century A.D., Buddhism had been strong, and Buddhist architecture had been the only ecclesiastical architecture of note in India, except for that of the Jains.

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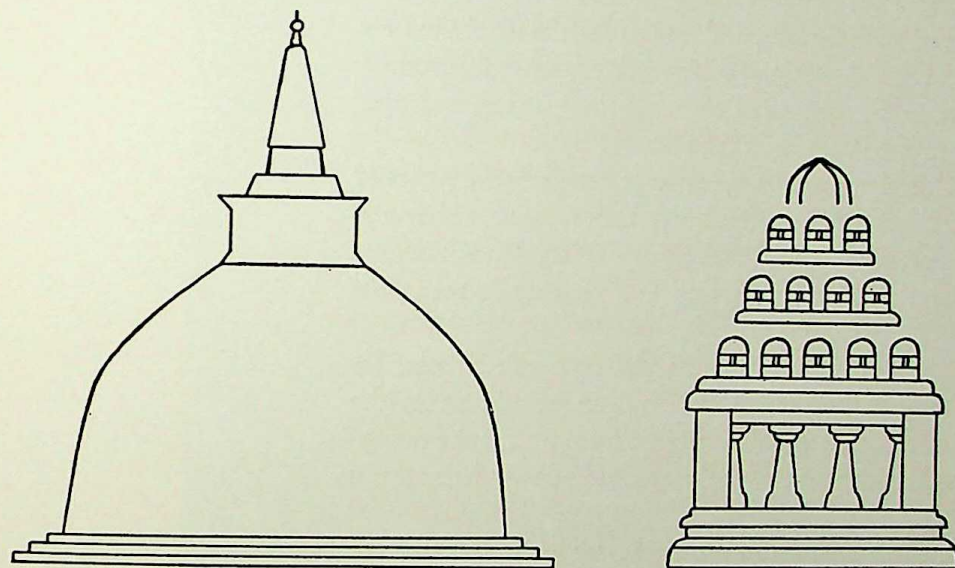
HINDU
TEMPLES

FIGURE 11. *Early Ceylonese dagoba: tiered-roof temple at Mahabalipuram.*

The first Buddhist stupas were those built 2,300 or 2,400 years ago at Sarnath and Sanchi in central India and at Anuradhapura in Ceylon. These early models—solid piles of brick that often, as in Ceylon, attained immense size—are architecturally austere. On the stupa, or dagoba, to use the Sinhalese name, there is virtually no decoration, and with its square platform and umbrella-shaped spire, one Ceylonese dagoba is much like another. Yet that this design influenced Hindu architecture may be seen by looking at some of the earliest Hindu temples built in stone.

Near Madras are the five chariot temples or *rathas* of Mahabalipuram, which stand at a little distance from the village and from the beach. These are hewn from

enormous rocks which through some geological quirk appear to have been forced up through the sands. None of them is very large—not more than 40 feet in length or height—and they are all close together. Two, in fact, are carved from the same boulder.

The technique used by the Hindu masons was to whittle down these huge boulders and to carve them into the shape of a building. The sides were made vertical and the roof was pitched at an angle. At the ends of the buildings carved figures or statues were sculptured, while along the sides, or at least one side, galleries were cut into the granite, forming a cave supported by pillars.

These pillars are ornately carved with figures, and on the back wall of the cave there is usually a mural carved in relief depicting Hindu gods or, more frequently, animals like lions and elephants. In the center of some of the galleries a deeper niche has been cut in which a figure of Vishnu or Siva stands.

The most interesting parts of these temples are, however, their floridly carved roofs. One temple has a four-sided pitched roof cut into tiers around which one can walk. On the top there is a rounded cupola in the shape of the Buddhist umbrella. Another of the temples has a plain roof, cut into four curving convex slabs so that it resembles a dome.

The largest temple has one interesting variation of the umbrella cupola, for instead of the usual rounded shape, a long cylinder is laid on its side across the apex of the roof, and each end is decorated with elaborate carvings. It is the prototype of the cylinders always found on the tops of the tower gates of modern Hindu temples.

In addition to the five rathas, there are also in the enclosure a number of very large monolithic statues of elephants and bulls. These are executed with the same care for detail and the same eye for naturalism that characterize the carvings in the temple walls. All together these temples form an interesting introduction to Hindu architecture because they represent much that is Buddhist, at the same time incorporating new, specifically Hindu innovations. The new features are mostly sculptural and involve a profusion of detail in the carving of roofs and pillars and a degree of naturalistic reproduction never found in Buddhist temples.

The carving of figures of gods and animals is not new, as we know from the Udayagiri cave temples, but where Jain and Buddhist sculpture tends to be stylized, the Hindu sculpture at Mahabalipuram is full of life and is based on natural objects. Unlike Buddhism, the religion of the Hindus includes many colorful gods and goddesses who, together with their animals and lesser divinities, become the principal characters of famous stories like those of Rama and Krishna. Hindu mythol-

PLATE 33. *Tank and gopuram,
Meenakshi Temple, Madurai.*



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ogy therefore provides hundreds of legends for the sculptor, dozens of historical events, and scores of gods who need representation in temples and public places. This change in sculptural design is most forcefully seen in the cave temples near the center of the village of Mahabalipuram, where long murals of descriptive carving are to be found and where there are large representations of Vishnu sleeping and of Siva seated with his wife Parvati. Even more interesting is the relief sculpture called "Arjuna's Penance," which is carved on an immense rock face. This stone is about 100 feet long and 50 feet tall, and although the decoration was never completed, what remains is a colorful *mélange* of divine, human, and animal figures. It is supposed to tell a story, but what is most noticeable are the two enormous elephants, which cover half of the relief, and the various monkeys, lions, birds, people, and gods on the other half. There is no perspective, but there is great vitality and interest in exact detail. This work, like the nearby Krishna Mandapam, which shows among other things a man milking a cow, seems to be especially Hindu in spirit because it is so full of humanity and earthiness.

On the beach at little distance stands the so-called Shore Temple, which is romantically placed just at the water's edge. This temple, a little older than the rathas, is built from blocks of stone and is, perhaps, more than any other single temple, the prototype for Hindu temple building in south India. It stands squarely with one foot in Buddhism and the other in Hinduism.

Here the Buddhist influence is primarily architectural. The temple is divided into two parts, a main chamber with a tall pitched roof and an antechamber with a low roof. To be sure, this formation is Hindu, but the roof itself is purely Buddhist. The principal tower is formed by five concentric stone tiers, while the smaller one has three. Each of these tiers carries a row of umbrella-shaped knobs which are simply smaller versions of the large cupolas on top of each tower. There is even a *htie* (spire) which surmounts these. Around the outer wall of the temple a further series of knobs repeats the umbrella motif.

The ground plan of the temple is predominantly Hindu. The *vimana* or main chamber is where the main image, the Siva-ite lingam, is kept, and it is reached through a door facing the sea. The lesser chamber or *jagamohana* contains a Nandi and a reclining figure, supposedly of Vishnu. Around the outside of the temple walls are carvings which the sea has unfortunately defaced, but they are clearly of Hindu inspiration. On the side of the temple facing towards the land are two rows of carved stone Nandis (sacred bulls) arranged to form a courtyard. There are over fifty of these life-sized statues; they are all in the traditional reclining posture and constitute the most striking feature of the temple.

Thus Mahabalipuram provides an excellent introduction to Hindu temple architecture. It is not as impressive as some of the later temples like Konarak or Madurai, but one's appreciation of the later grandeurs is increased by having seen what existed before.

Normally, after one has seen Mahabalipuram, one goes on to Kanchipuram, which is only 30 miles away, but in historical survey like this, it is better to go north to a place 300 miles south of Calcutta for the next stage in the development of Hindu architecture. There, at Bhubaneswar, which is now once again a provincial capital, there was once, in the ninth and tenth centuries, a great capital city whose temples are all that now remain.

Although historical dating is difficult, some of the temples at Bhubaneswar appear to be even older than those at Mahabalipuram, and the same Buddhist influence in roof construction is also visible. But what particularly attracts the attention is a group of small temples built in the ninth and tenth centuries and the great Lingaraj Temple, which dominates the site.

These small temples are on the whole no larger than the Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram, and generally they follow the traditional design, which consists of a main chamber and an antechamber. The most interesting architectural development is centered on the shape of the tower. Instead of using Buddhist tiers, the tower has here been elongated and decorated with vertical lines which rise from the ground and curve in towards the top. This curvilinear tower is surmounted not by an umbrella, but by a cupola in the shape of a disc or wheel which is laid flat on top. From the hub of this wheel there occasionally rises a short flagpole instead of the Buddhist stupa.

From a distance these towers somewhat resemble beehives or the pope's tiara. The shape used here was widely imitated in Cambodia and Burma, where Indian influence spread, although in India itself it was later replaced by a different form. Only the main tower or vimana assumed this new elongated shape, however; the jagamohana or antechamber retained the low four-sided pitched roof, still often divided into tiers.

Aside from this revolutionary architectural change, the other development most noticeable at Bhubaneswar is the growing interest in and skill in executing sculptured panels for the decoration of the exterior of the buildings.

The earliest representative of this new style of temple is the Parashurameswar, which is supposed to date from the early eighth century. Although it follows the new pattern with a tall curvilinear tower, its carvings consist of relatively simple panels of bas-relief depicting events from the life of Siva. Except for these shallow

reliefs and for statues in three special niches, two of which are missing, there is no statuary as such on the exterior of this temple. Nevertheless, the Parashurameswar, by virtue of the number of panels with which it is decorated, set the style for all later Hindu temples. Two temples which illustrate how this technique developed are the ninth-century Mukteswar and the Raj Rani Temple.

The Mukteswar is constructed on a flat platform of paving stones at the edge of a tank or pool called the Kedagouri, which is spring-fed and supposed to be medicinal. The temple consists only of a vimana or main tower and a jagamohana or offering chamber. At the entrance, however, there is a charming gateway of twin pillars which support a handsomely carved and embossed oval pediment.

Seen from the side, the main tower seems a mass of vertical lines; these are created by a series of ninety-degree indentations at each corner which give it a zigzag pattern. The introduction of additional angles also increases the amount of space available for carved figures and niches. These indeed number into the hundreds and are full of life and vigor, covering all aspects of ordinary life as well as illustrating religious stories.

The tower, in the shape of a beehive, recedes by what appear to be a series of layers placed one upon the other with slight interstices between. This is merely a development of the older tier system of roofing. On the top is the cupola or horizontal *aula* and on top of it a small metal spire in the shape of a trident. The jagamohana is lower, and its roof is constructed in the familiar style of diminishing tiers.

The interior arches of the temple, like the others at Bhubaneshwar, are formed merely by placing succeeding layers of stone on top of one another so that each one protrudes slightly beyond the one below it until the top one meets its neighbor from across the way and forms an arch. The keystone arch was apparently as unknown at Bhubaneshwar as it was at Angkor. Most of the temples at Bhubaneshwar are quite plain in the interior, but the Mukteswar is the exception and is elaborately carved on the ceilings and walls.

The Raj Rani, like the Mukteswar, is also made of red sandstone, but it is not so old, having been built in the eleventh century. The statues in the niches are much taller and more deeply cut than at the Mukteswar and, as at the Brahmeswara, many of them are erotic. Most prominent are the many statues of voluptuous maidens with large bosoms, long legs, and tiny waists.

These smaller temples, then, demonstrate an architectural development in two ways—the new design used for their towers and the elaborateness of their sculptural decoration. Yet another development, however, may be seen at Bhubanesh-

war, and that is the extension of the architectural ground plan as demonstrated in the so-called Great Temple or Lingaraj. This temple was built in two stages, the first part in the seventh or eighth century, the second in the latter part of the eleventh. When the Lingaraj was first built, it was probably considered to be magnificent, but by the eleventh century it seemed inadequate. Having evidently grown tired of the small, if exquisite, temples that they had been building for some time, the kings and priests began to want something larger and more grand. Thus in this second period of Hindu architecture a new feature was added. First of all, the various parts of the temples were enlarged to a number of times their normal size; then new buildings were added to the old structure, increasing the total number to four. These extra buildings—the *bhogmandapam* or entrance building and the *natamandira* or audience building—clearly enhanced the magnificence of the temples. In addition, high walls which isolated the temples from neighboring secular buildings were constructed and have remained a feature of all Hindu temples built since the eleventh century.

A number of temples were built in this new style, but the most noted, perhaps, are the Lingaraj at Bhubaneshwar and the Jagganath at Puri. Since local superstition prevents these temples from being entered by non-Hindus, it is impossible to report on their sculptural detail or on the internal appearance of the buildings. All that can be said is that the presence of these antechambers before the vimana or principal shrine increases the majesty of the approach.

The most impressive and surely the largest of this new style of temple is the famous Black Pagoda at Konarak, not far from Bhubaneshwar. It is now in ruins, and most of what remains is not the great tower itself, which has fallen, but merely the jagamohana or offerings building. Yet this structure is itself so enormous, so covered with extraordinary sculptures, and so perfectly proportioned architecturally that it is by far the most interesting temple in either of the states of Orissa or Madras.

It was built, most people agree, in the thirteenth century by the Raja Narasima Dev I of the Ganga dynasty. It was dedicated to the sun god rather than to Siva or Vishnu, but it was also a temple of victory, since it was Narasima Dev who defeated the invading Moslems from the north and kept Orissa free of Islam for two more centuries.

The temple is designed to represent the chariot of the sun god being drawn towards the rising sun by seven great horses. In order to illustrate this idea, twenty-four huge stone wheels, twelve on each side, were placed along the base of the temple, and stone horses were positioned at the eastern end and along the eastern porch



PLATE 34. *Rathas, Mahabalipuram.*

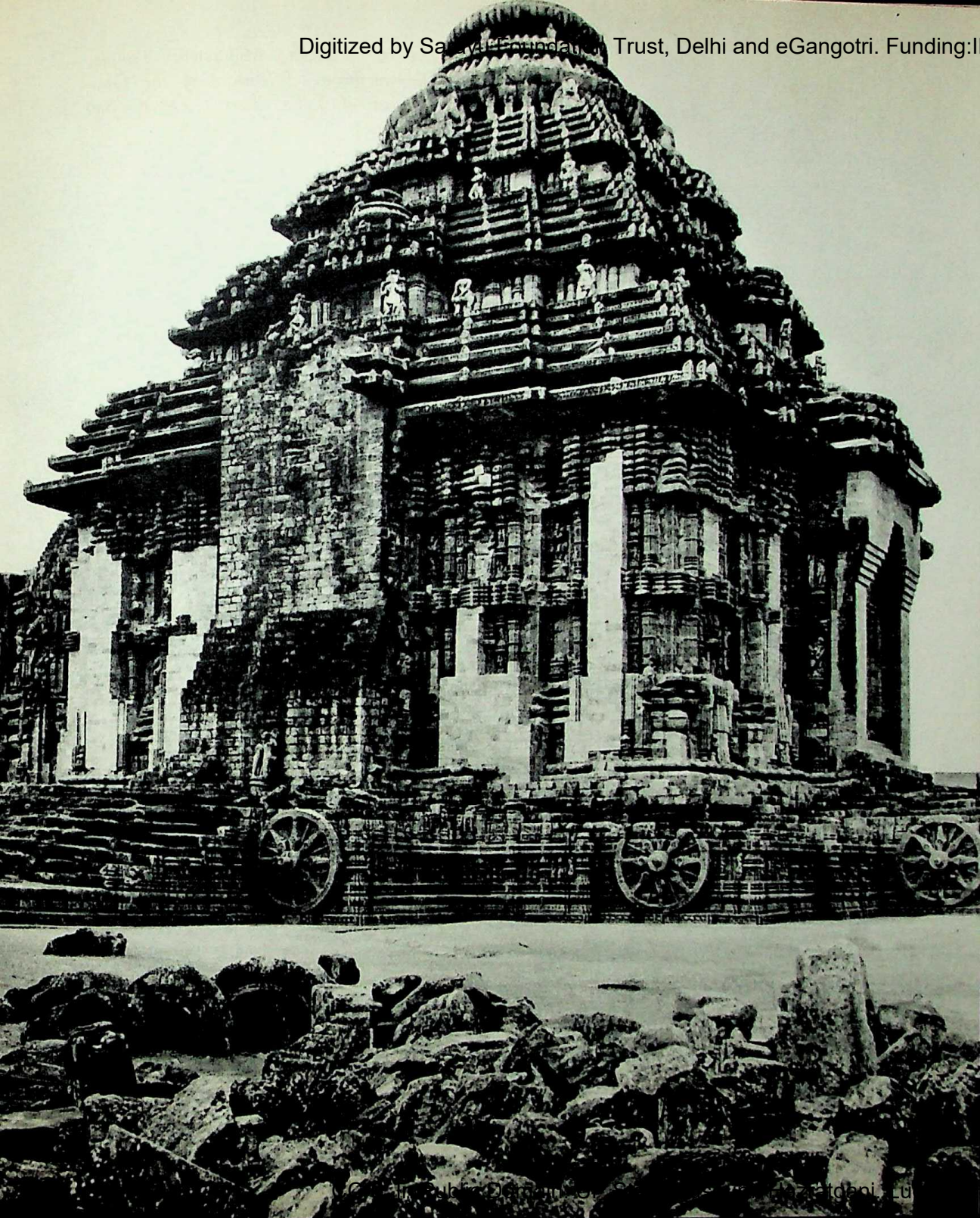


PLATE 35. *Shore Temple, Mahabalipuram.*



PLATE 36. *Vimana, Mukteswar Temple, Bhubaneswar. (Courtesy of the Government of India Tourist Office, San Francisco)*

PLATE 37. *Konarak Temple (the Black Pagoda). (Photo by Eliot Elisofon)*



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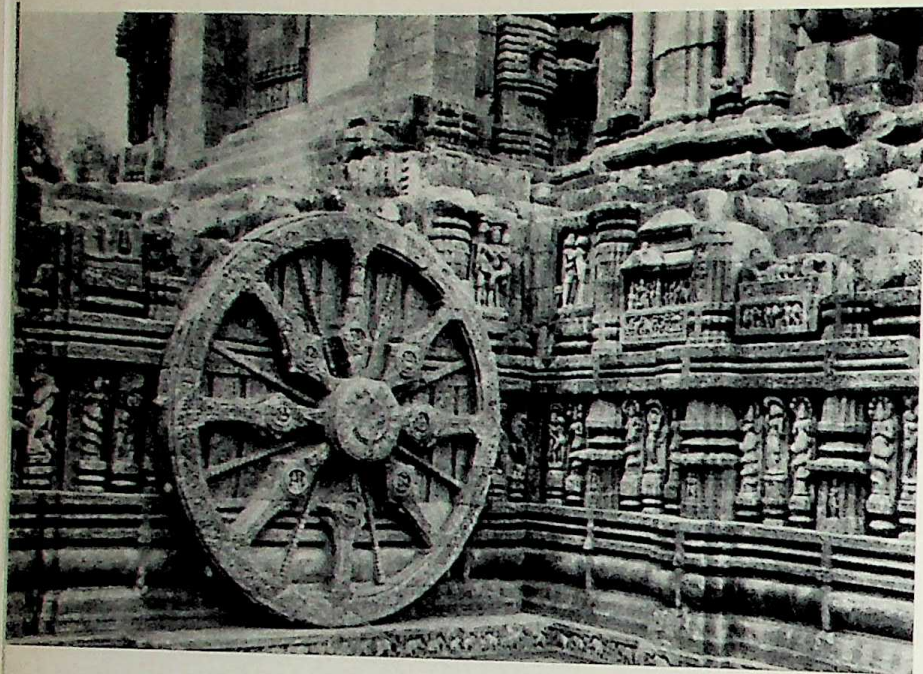
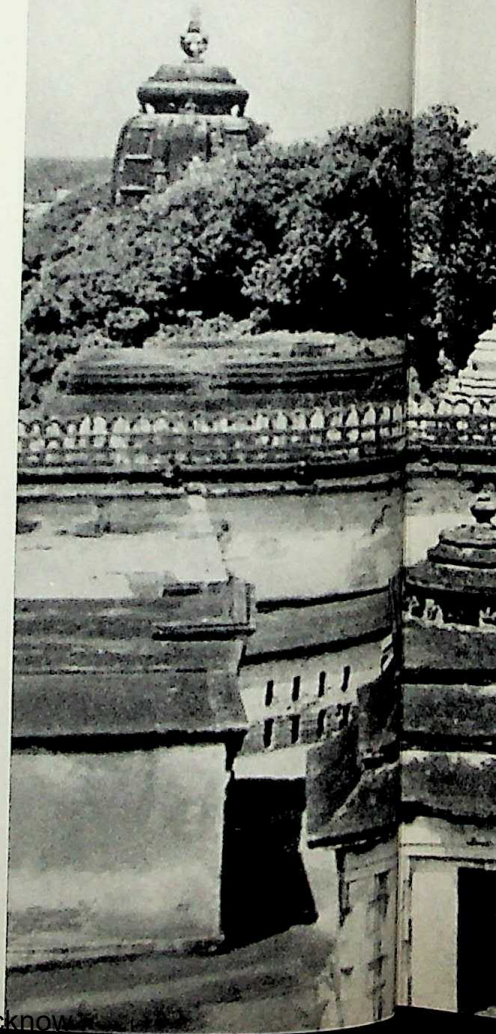
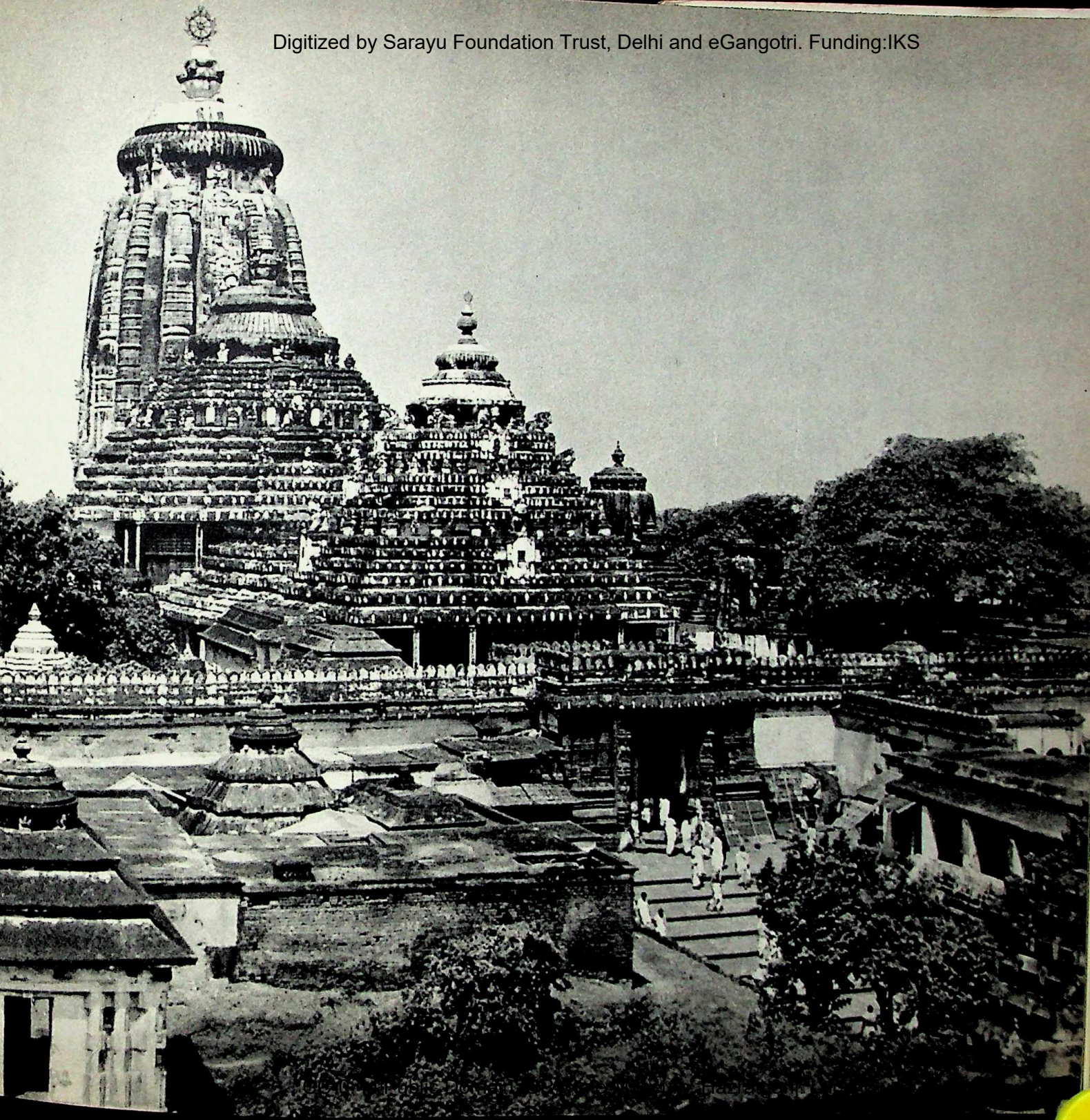


PLATE 38. *Wheel, Konarak Temple.*

PLATE 39. *Jagganath Temple, Puri.*
(Photo by Dr. Walter Spink)





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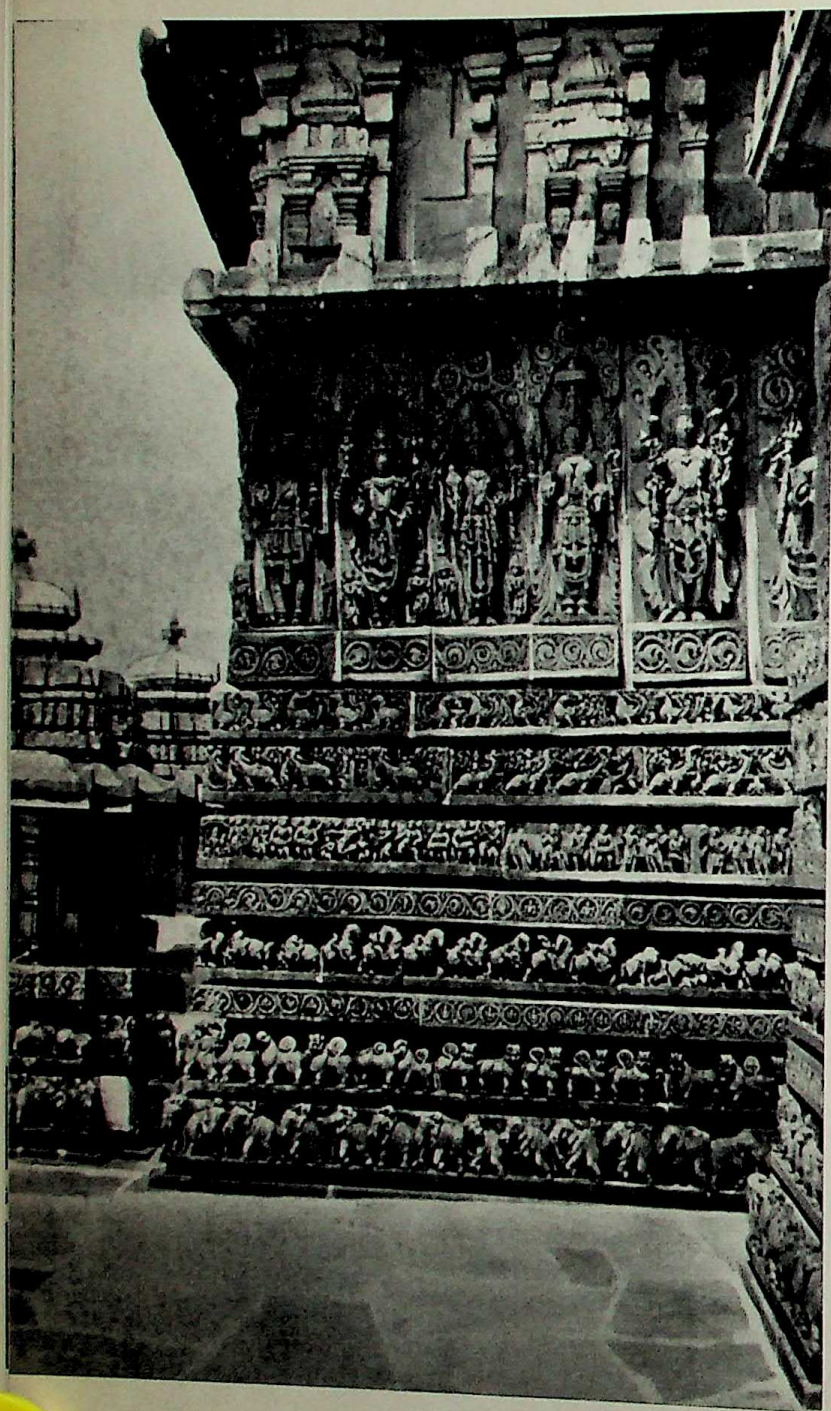


PLATE 40. Terrace, Hoysala Temple,
Halebid, showing friezes.

PLATE 41. Detail: Siva and Parvati,
Hoysala Temple, Halebid.



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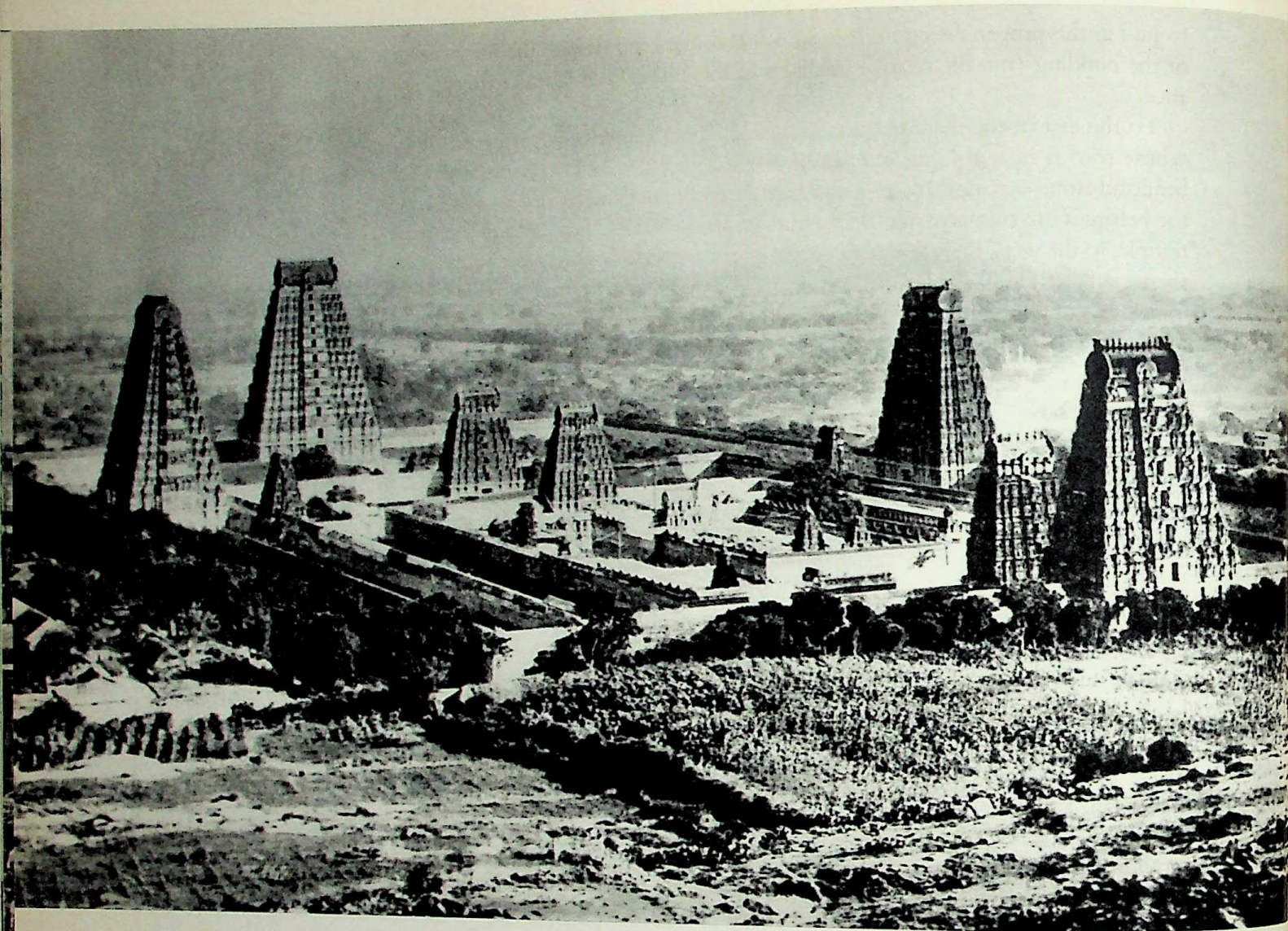


PLATE 42. Late style of Hindu temple, general view of Tiruvannamalai.
(Courtesy of the Fogg Museum, Harvard University)

to pull in the proper direction. It is an original idea, and despite the massiveness of the building (and the relative smallness of the wheels) it is plausible in appearance.

To the east of the main block is located the Nat Mandir or dancing pavilion, whose roof is now missing but whose columns are covered with intricate and beautiful stone carvings. It serves as a kind of preliminary to the great procession, for before it are two prancing horses plunging towards the east. Behind the main temple, to the west, there is a small open space where two guardian lions stand, and then a smaller temple dedicated to the wife of the sun god brings up the rear. On either side of the temple, though at some little distance, are groups of statuary: at the south a pair of horses and at the north two life-sized dancing elephants. All of these statues and buildings are placed in a vast enclosure some 900 feet long and 500 feet wide.

Architecturally, the Konarak temple is most remarkable for its fine proportions, the roof and the height of its building being perfectly suited to each other. The roof, in fact, is one of the triumphs of the temple. Constructed of four sides which are pitched towards the center, it is also broken into tiers so that there are three galleries high enough for a man to walk round. These are fitted with statuary and help to relieve the heavy appearance of the roof. At the top, some 200 feet from the ground, there is a circular disc or wheel which lies on its side and imparts a sense of finish to the structure as a whole.

Since it was a relatively late temple, it was built with an elegance not previously known in Orissa. The impression is that no expense was spared, that this temple, as a lodging place of the sun god, was to lack no comforts, and that therefore it was to be more grand than any palace. The care for detail is, however, most clearly seen in the sculpture.

Indeed, when all is said and done, it is the sculpture or rather the adaption of sculpture to architecture that most attracts the visitor to Konarak. Everywhere there are sculptured figures executed fully as well as they were in medieval Europe. The vast dancing elephants to the north of the temple, each holding a man in his trunk, and the straining horses at the east and south are full of romantic fire and energy, whereas the six-foot figures of dancing girls, gods and maidens playing musical instruments along the galleries of the roof, and the fifteen-foot effigies of the sun god in green chlorite represent calmness and repose and are executed with exquisite detail and sense of proportion. But perhaps more noticeable are the hundreds of lesser figures standing in niches along the temple walls or incorporated into friezes. Along the entire base of the temple, a distance in all of some 100 yards,

there runs a frieze of elephants interrupted at intervals by the enormous chariot wheels. These wheels are over eight feet in diameter and combine geometric with figurative design. They are carved flush onto the vertical face of the base, but they are so finely wrought that they look like real wheels. Behind the spokes the stone has been minutely carved into delicate lacelike patterns, the better to emphasize the outline of the wheel, while the rim and the eight spokes have themselves been carved with minute geometric patterns resembling the finest filigree work. Considered apart, the wheels are without doubt the most beautiful example of sculpture at Konarak.

One aspect of Hindu temple sculpture which is particularly obvious at Konarak and which customarily baffles commentators and apologists is the frankly sensual and erotic nature of most of the statuary. At Angkor and at certain other places one frequently comes upon statues of rather jolly, curvaceous young ladies. Usually they are buxom maidens who are scantily clad and who stand in provocative but not indecent poses. These young ladies are generally looked upon with an indulgent eye—as representative of something charming and fresh—and to complain of them would be extremely prudish.

But what of the statues at Konarak, and others like them at Khajurao and several other temples in India? In addition to the same winsome girls, there are hundreds of statues of men and women engaging in all kinds of sexual intercourse. The milder sort merely show the man embracing the girl, possibly fondling her breasts. The next stage is to repeat the embrace but to add an erect penis—often of gigantic size—to the figure of the man. Others show actual copulation. These are the less extreme poses, for there are many others depicting every sort of natural and unnatural love-making.

There is no use in pretending that these statues are not, by Western standards at least, extremely salacious. It has been said that they merely represent the *joie de vivre* of a simple people (and to judge from the smiles on the faces of the statues they are certainly enjoying themselves), but the stress on copulation and even perversion seems somewhat exaggerated for that explanation. Another commentator states that these statues are placed on the exterior walls of the temple merely to represent all facets of life and that therefore sex must not be excluded. This is true enough, but there is hardly a statue which does not show copulation or at least emphasize the sexual aspect of life. This explanation goes on to say that these erotic statues represent the ordinary evils of human life but that these statues are near the base of the temple walls whereas nonsexual images appear higher up. The only

trouble with this statement is that it is not true, since at Konarak, at least, men and women copulate a good eighty feet in the air.

The government guidebook states, finally, that "these erotic figures depict a ritual of the Tantric cult according to which self-immolation can be reached only through experience, both sensual and spiritual." While the moralizing overtone of that statement rouses one's suspicions, it is a more honest explanation than those of the other apologists. Certainly, to go no further, it is significant that the majority of Hindu temples are dedicated to Siva, whose symbol is the erect phallus and who, despite his role as destroyer, is also the god of fertility. In his book, *The Golden Bough*, Sir James Frazer pointed out that fertility was always the prime concern of primitive people and that many gods, like the Egyptian Osiris, were worshipped as fertility gods. They were worshipped in order that they might bring fertility to the lands and a good crop from the fields. For simple agricultural people, this theology is quite natural.

The sun god at Konarak is closely allied to this fertility cult. Not only is he frequently confused or at least mixed with images of Siva, but as the god of the sun, as the giver of light and strength, he must inevitably be close to the fertility god.

Furthermore, to return to the people, since fertility and sex are so closely related, it follows that in an age lacking other entertainments, there would be considerable interest in sex itself, and more precisely in copulation. We know, for example, that on Tahiti, an island renowned for its preoccupation with sex, there were once rites of a religious nature which were exclusively concerned with sex. One of these was a maiden's first menstruation, which became a public religious spectacle. In addition there were frequent displays among the Tahitians of public copulation by experts so that the various techniques of love-making could be learned by the people at large. The modern Tahitian dances are a remnant of these ancient rites.

If one accepts the premise that the conditions of life among the primitive Polynesians and the builders of Konarak were roughly the same, it would not be surprising to find that the people had transferred what seems to us an excessive interest in sex to the sculpture of temples. Sex was spontaneous and pleasant, and religion was also pleasant and spontaneous. There was no gloomy puritanism to induce a hypocritical attitude towards sex, for religion was joyful and creative, not fearful and destructive.

If these conjectures are correct, it would be interesting to try and see to what extent freedom about sexual matters determines the greatness of a people. Normally

it is suggested that orgies, saturnalia, and general licentiousness are marks of decadence, and Nero's Rome and Pompeii are put forward as examples of deteriorating civilizations. On the other hand, many countries have flourished when freedom about sexual matters was the norm. Egypt was great when its fertility rites were most seriously attended to; Greece was great when Aristophanes published his outspoken plays. The Italian Renaissance was a mixture of spirituality and sensuality, and during the Elizabethan age, playwrights like Shakespeare did not hesitate to fill their works with obscene and lewd jokes.

It would, of course, be foolish to make a rule from these conjectures and to assume that merely because the Konarak Temple is a magnificent artistic accomplishment, whatever the nature of its sculpture, the Indians who built it were equally magnificent. For if one were to accept as a "lesson of Konarak" the thesis that outspokenness in sexual matters and a fresh interest in copulation and erotic art were a sign of greatness, then one would have a deal of difficulty explaining why other equally beautiful Hindu temples do not show the same erotic interest—why, for example, the temples of Halebid and Belur, which display an even higher degree of craftsmanship than that found at Konarak, portray no erotic acts.

In other words, there seems to be no wholly satisfactory explanation of the use of erotic statuary in religious buildings. It would be possible to argue, for example, that the sculptors transferred the licentiousness of the court to the temple walls in order merely to amuse the gods. On the other hand, the erotic statuary might reflect personal repressions, just as in America and England, where puritan codes prevail, there is great traffic in obscene magazines. Finally, to return to the original thesis, the question remains why, when the Indians were *more* primitive, say at Mahabalipuram, they did not emphasize fertility rites. It is possible that the influence of Buddhism restrained them, but still no completely satisfactory solution to the problem exists.

Skill in carving and a less controversial subject for statuary brings to mind the famous temples of Halebid and Belur in Mysore State. These two temples are about one hundred years older than the Konarak pagoda, but their stone carving is more beautiful and intricate than that of the later work. The town of Halebid was the capital of the Hoysala dynasty, and there the Hoysaleswara Temple was built in 1141-73, two centuries before the dynasty fell to the Moslem conquerors.

The two temples mark a change in architectural design, for instead of building temples with high vimanas or towers, like those in Bhubaneshwar and Puri, the Hoysala architects built flat-topped buildings no more than 20 feet tall which had no towers or protuberances of any kind. Later Hindu temples were built in this

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same style, but Halebid and Belur lack certain other later features and therefore appear to be somewhat stark and open.

Yet if this new design seems limited in respect to height, it makes up for it by a number of new variations in the ground plan. The Halebid Temple, for example, is built in the form of a U. From the base of the U extend two projections upon each of which are built *mandapams* or columned pavilions containing gigantic carved statues of Siva's bull Nandi. One of these pavilions is slightly larger than the other, and this gives a pleasing variety to a temple which is otherwise symmetrical. The main U-shaped building of the temple is extremely complex, for the walls, instead of being plain, are broken into innumerable vertical angles, many of which are smaller than ninety degrees so that the corners and points of the temple somewhat resemble a star. Because the façade of the Halebid Temple is broken into a complex pattern of angles and recesses, the area available for sculpture is large.

Upon this already complicated base, the sculptors of Halebid executed intricate carvings. A convenient descriptive aid is to call Halebid (and equally, Belur) the Sainte-Chapelle of Hindu art. What is meant, of course, is that each in relation to the whole art of religious architecture is a kind of jewel, an especially gorgeous and magnificently wrought example. With regard to the stonework at Halebid, it is no exaggeration to say that it is the finest to be found anywhere in India, including Konarak. Even more completely than at Konarak, every inch of wall space both inside and out is covered with carving, so that the temple resembles a sumptuously carved and decorated casket of jewels.

From a distance, the Halebid Temple is not particularly impressive, despite its location on a hill overlooking a lake. Its magnificence becomes clear, however, when it is approached more closely. It was said that Konarak was more a sculptural than an architectural achievement, but the remark is even more true of Halebid. The base upon which the temple stands is plain and, in shape, is an extension of the main building, but the temple itself is covered by a mass of intricate stone carvings said to be the work of one Jakanacharya (the only Hindu artist who seems to have escaped anonymity). It is probable, however, that he merely supervised the task, for many sculptors must have been required to complete the work.

The carving follows two different patterns, one for the east side and one for the west. For the bottom ten feet, however, except where it is broken by doorways, the design is the same all the way around, and consists of a series of layers of carved figures which run around the building in a frieze. Approximately nine inches high, each layer is confined to one subject, but there is no skimping of detail or mass production, and plenty of variety exists amongst the different figures.

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Starting at the bottom, there is a frieze of elephants which is surmounted by successive layers of lions, geometric scrollwork, warriors on horseback, military parades, wild boars, peacocks, medallions in relief, and scrollwork until the final row of standing figures is reached. On the west side, these layers are followed by statues four feet tall, and above them come purely geometrical carvings in panels which connect with the roof. On the east side, squat round columns are placed at intervals above the receding layers of carving, and in between are flat panels of stone grillwork which admit light into the interior of the building. The decoration here is purely geometrical, and that at Belur is finer than that at Halebid.

The admission of light by these grilles and by the doors makes the carvings in the interior more easily visible than they usually are in Hindu temples. The interior is less elaborately carved than the exterior, but with its rows of columns, sculptured domes, and shrines carved into the walls, it is still a magnificent sight. Some of the columns have capitals of an original design consisting of four medallion figures which are attached at angles and face downwards towards the floor. This design is also used on the exterior of Belur. Curiously enough, however, the interiors of both of these temples most resemble the interior of an Italian Renaissance building. The same gray-green marble-like stone is used in each, and the columns and shrines of the Indian buildings seem to have that same classical angularity and massiveness often found in Italy.

The Belur Temple has more impressive surroundings than Halebid, since it is located in the center of a large paved courtyard containing other shrines, towers, and a tank. Some of the small temples have fine carvings, and the central temple, dedicated to Vishnu, is delicately carved. Still, despite its better position, it is less exciting than the never-finished Halebid Temple, which, alone on a hill, seems more suggestive of the patience and religious fervor of the men who built it.

The next stage in the development of Hindu temple art stems from these great works of the Hoysala dynasty, but never afterwards was there a temple so magnificently carved as these. Just as Konarak with its emphasis on size was the natural culmination of an interest in grandeur which began with the great temples at Bhubaneswar and Puri, so the temples of the last period of Hindu architecture, especially those built or redecorated under the reign of the Vijayanagar kings, stressed the spaciousness that the Hoysala Temple first introduced to Hindu architecture.

Whether it be at Kanchipuram, near Madras, or at Tiruchirapalli or Madurai, the new pattern is much the same. The new temples are much larger than the older ones, and they stand in an open courtyard which is enclosed by a tall and thick

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stone wall. At the gates to the temple, generally four in number, there usually are high pyramidal towers called *gopurams*. These are surmounted by cylinders of stone from which five or seven or nine golden spires project. Frequently, as at the great temple at Madurai or at the Ekambareswara Temple at Kanchipuram, these towers reach to a height of 200 feet or more. They are constructed of brick and broken into tiers. Upon each layer sit a crowd of sculptured figures, and in the newer temples these are painted in bright colors. Thus the old tiered roof of the Buddhist pagoda has ended up as the gate tower in the relatively modern Hindu temple. Exactly why the vimana or temple tower was discarded in favor of the gopuram or gate tower is not clear, but the new style was adopted by almost all modern temples.

Within the plain outer wall there is frequently another equally plain wall which encloses the temple itself so that this building has no exterior shape visible to the observer. But lest this austerity seem too severe, these later temples also frequently have large mandapams or columned pavilions, which stand in the open court. These pavilions appear to derive from the old bhogmandapam or entrance building of the four-part temples at Puri and Bhubaneshwar. Some of them, like the huge one at the Sri Rangam Temple in Tiruchirapalli and the one at the vast Meenakshi Temple in Madurai, have as many as a thousand pillars. Pilgrims sometimes take their rest in these colonnades, but for the most part they are kept locked up and are very dirty.

Some of the genius of the Indian sculptor has been perpetuated in these later mandapams, especially in those temples which felt the influence of the famous Vijayanagar kings, who controlled all of south India from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. One of the finest of these is in the Vishnu temple of Vardarajaswami in Kanchipuram. The mandapam of this temple has a hundred pillars, and each column of dark-gray granite is beautifully carved, frequently in the shape of a rider on horseback. Sometimes there are two different riders, one visible from each side, and often they ride parrots or swans rather than horses. The statues are carved in fine detail and represent figures from Hindu mythology. So skilled were the Vijayanagar masons that from a single stone block—one, for example, at each corner of the mandapam—they fashioned whole chains of stone of which none of the links is broken.

Yet another, and very agreeable, feature of the new style of temples is the incorporation of a tank or pool within the temple. Sometimes these are outside of the temple and have red and white candy-striped walls to match the striped walls of the temple, but the more attractive ones—as at the Kamakshi and Ekambareswara temples at Kanchipuram and the Meenakshi Temple at Madurai—are inside.

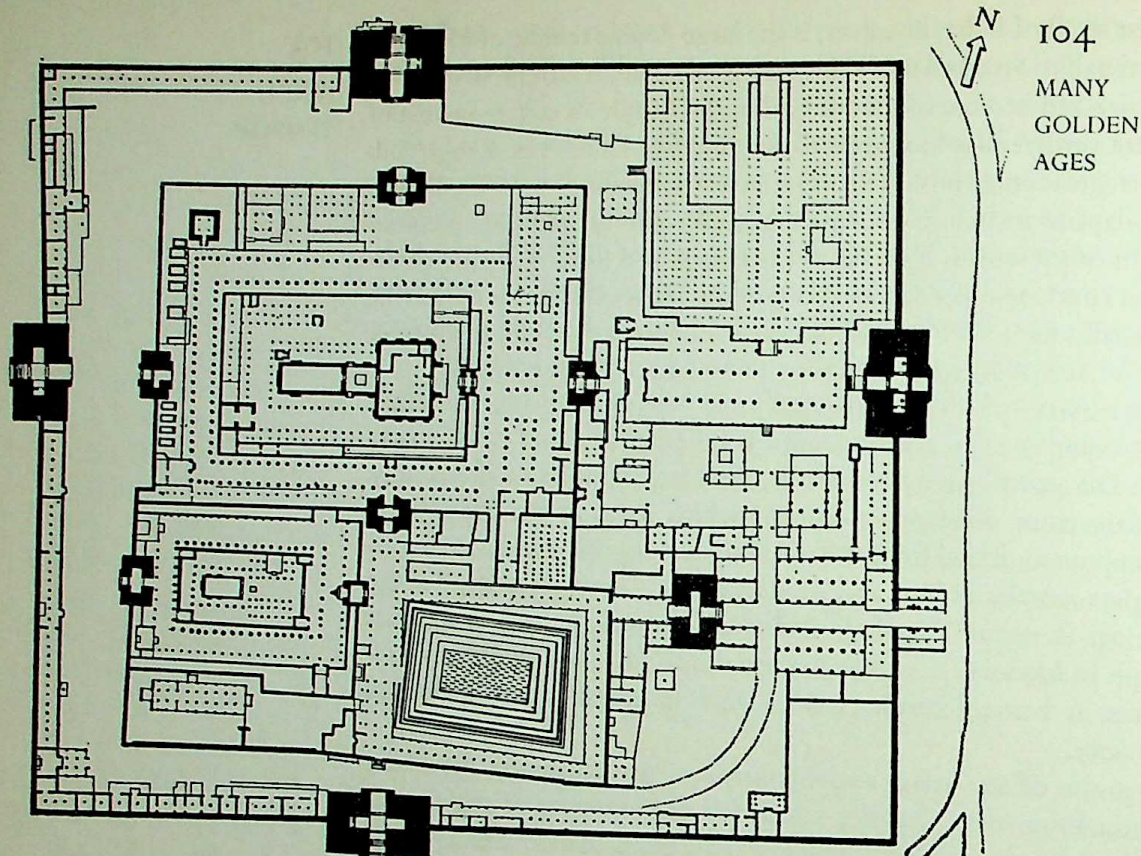


FIGURE 12. Plan of Meenakshi Temple at Madurai. (Courtesy of Penguin Books Ltd.)

Usually they have steps running the whole length and breadth of the pool which lead down into the brackish green water, and sometimes there is a small shrine on an island in the center. The religious purpose of these tanks is to wash away sins, and the water in some of them is reputed to be very holy.

These modern Hindu temples, with their high outer walls and high gopurams or gateways, through which one enters into a courtyard containing the temple and one or more mandapams and a tank, are the ones most frequently seen in India today. On the whole their pattern remains unchanged, and since there is very little sculptural work in these temples except on the towers, they are relatively dull compared to the older ones,

One of the best in all of India, however, is the large double temple of Madurai, which is dedicated half to Siva and half to his wife Meenakshi. It is impressive mostly because of its size and because of the life within the temple. It covers an area of over 70,000 square yards; it has four great towers and five lesser ones, a large tank which fits at an irregular angle into a pillared courtyard, two large temples, a number of huge mandapams including one of a thousand columns, and endless colonnaded passages. In other words, it is one of the largest and most complete of the relatively modern Hindu temples, lacking none of the expected features and having a number not usually found. The columns near the Meenakshi Temple resemble some of the best Vijayanagar work elsewhere, but since the Madurai Temple is so huge, much of it inevitably remains rather plain.

The most interesting time to visit the temple is at night, for then it is possible to sense the place as a house of worship rather than as a museum. Just before the meal-time of the gods the trumpets blare and the drums beat as the procession of Brahmans bearing food moves towards the inner sanctuary. The faithful close in round the entrance to the inner temple, which is lit partly by oil lamps and partly (alas!) by neon signs; then, as the procession goes by, they join the palms of their hands and hold them up before their bowed faces in obeisance to their gods.

Elsewhere there is a perpetual going to and fro. Near the main entrance are stalls where it is possible to buy flowers and oil for offerings to the gods and where chalk and paste are sold for the marking of foreheads to indicate whether one is a follower of Vishnu or of Siva.

Entrance to the two sancta sanctorum is as usual forbidden to non-Hindus, but what goes on within can be judged from observation elsewhere. The Brahman priest places the offering of flowers on a brass tray, pours oil over them, and then sets them on fire with a lighted piece of paper. He then pours the contents of the tray over the top of the image—usually the lingam of Siva—as an offering. It is a simple ceremony, but in the half light and with the strong smell of incense and the grease-painted priest it seems strange and unearthly.

Like every other art, then, the building of Hindu temples underwent a steady development. Starting from the Buddhist stupa with its tiered roof and umbrella cupola, the style was soon modified, additional antechambers were added, and the roof eventually was heightened into a tall curvilinear tower with a flat disc on top. At this point sculpture on the exterior of the temple reached its apex, with one style at Konarak and a more delicate design at Halebid and Belur. The third stage of Hindu temple architecture involved the removal of towers from the temple itself and the erection instead of tall gateway towers or gopurams. Other new fea-

tures were large mandapams or pillared pavilions and the introduction of tanks. In this third stage, the Hindu temple is much more of an architectural than a sculptural achievement. The best, naturally, are those which provide dramatic architectural panoramas, which use space most intelligently. Size therefore assumed a greater importance than it had in the early temples.

The development of the art clearly reflects religious changes. The early temples were dependent on the Buddhist sources, but as Hinduism regained its vigor, its influence soon made itself felt, mostly through sculpture. Later, at the time when sculpture achieved its greatest successes, as at Konarak and Halebid, the temple changed architecturally as well, breaking away from the mountain-shaped pagoda and introducing a tall curvilinear tower. The beehive shape of this tower was, however, somehow unsatisfactory: its curved lines suggested indecision, for it almost reached a point or central peak but never did. It was later replaced by the pyramidal towers over the temple gateways, which at least have cleaner lines even if they leave less scope for variations in design and sculpture. In this last phase, sculpture appears to have declined: no longer were the walls covered with relief sculpture—only a few pillars were decorated—and brick replaced stone in the tall towers. At the end one senses a certain decadence.

It would be argued, then, that the third style of Hindu temple architecture is less satisfactory than the best of the second or the first style. Or to phrase it differently, a fourth style, which would combine the sculptural achievements of the early temples with the architectural success of the later, has never been attempted, and probably never will be.*

Still the problem remains as to the interest and meaning that Hindu temples as a whole have for the Western observer. The fact that many of them are still in use and not abandoned like those in Angkor means that their effect will not be the same as that of ruins. In this sense a consideration of Hindu temple art is similar to a study of Gothic architecture.

As one travels from one end of India to another, principally looking at temples, one finds a certain heaviness descending on the spirit. The causes of this seem to be partly artistic and partly a result of contemporary conditions. For the unfortunate fact is that one is usually not permitted to look at a Hindu temple in peace. Touts, beggars, and false guides descend upon the visitor and harry him from place to place, dispensing misinformation and preventing him from seeing the temple in peace and quiet. In time one grows used to these people and accepts them as one

* Certainly the new Hindu temple at Banaras Hindu University and the Birla Temple in New Delhi suggest no progress, since both are rather uninspired copies of older models.

accepts the tiresome prohibition of entrance to the main sanctuary, but inevitably they affect one's appreciation of the architecture and one's attitude toward the people themselves.

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HINDU
TEMPLES

The other cause for depression is purely artistic and historical. To be sure, it is true that even in the least interesting of Hindu temples a certain amount of mystery and symbolism is generated. But it would also appear to be true that once a style was established, the tendency was to copy it slavishly until such time as an entirely new style was invented. Temples of the later style, with their identical gopurams, mandapams, and tanks, are certainly monotonous, but so, surprisingly, are those in the Bhubaneshwar or Puri style, with the exception of Konarak, which is a work of genius.

There is of course the initial pleasure of sorting out the various styles and of recognizing the pleasant Hindu gods, like Nandi and Ganesa. On the other hand, because of an artistic code that apparently established one correct and acceptable way in which to portray the gods, there is less excitement and variety in Hindu sculpture than there is in Gothic. The Hindu artist presumably knew his mythology as well as the Christian artist knew his, but somehow there is a difference between them. Medieval artists in Europe seem to have exercised a freer hand in their paintings, sculpture, and stained glass. Their subjects may be the same, since the Biblical stories could not be altered, but the personality of the Gothic artist appears in his statues or paintings, just as a conductor's personality emerges in his interpretation of a symphony. Hindu art on the whole lacks this vitality. There are brilliant exceptions, as at Khajurao, Halebid, and Konarak, but the general standard is not high.

One possible cause of this apparent deadness may come from an unexpected source, and that is the great diversity of the religion of the Hindus. With its hundreds of gods and enormous mythology, Hinduism is a crowd scene, while Christianity and Buddhism narrow their focus and concentrate on a few. One might think that this relative narrowness might produce, as it did in Islam, a static art, but the relative unity of Christianity and Buddhism seems to have imparted a fervor and sense of purpose to Christian and Buddhist artists which in the diverse religion of the Hindus becomes dissipated and somehow spread too thin over their crowds of gods.

Hindu architecture cannot, of course, be dismissed, for even if it may be inferior to other ecclesiastical arts, it has its moments of greatness and, because of its rigidity, maintains certain standards below which it never falls. Unlike the churches of the Christians and the pagodas of Buddhists, which are as often hideous as they

are magnificent, the Hindu temples sail on a more even keel, rarely veering either to greatness or to tawdriness. For this reason their emotional appeal is reduced. One can be delighted by much of what one sees—particularly by the very human quality Hindu art frequently demonstrates in its statuary—but one misses the tremendous impact of the successful Gothic cathedral, which is an immense complexity devoted to one end, or of the Buddhist pagoda, which rises as an intellectually honest symbol of a great truth.

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FIVE · ELLORA AND AJANTA*

IN INDIA, remarkable things tend to hide themselves in relatively inaccessible places, and Khajurao, Hampi, and Halebid all require long and tedious journeys away from the main centers. The reason for this phenomenon is merely that the centers of population have changed. Each of the three towns mentioned above was once a great capital; today each lies in ruins, and the population has vanished. Whenever one comes upon one of these deserted cities in India, the ruins of a previous age, one is confronted with history and, through it, the transitory quality of life. The Hindu's view of life, in which reincarnation plays so large a part, seems especially to be in harmony with these historical transformations, however. For just as in some of the previous lives of a man who is poor today there may once have been grandeur and elegance, so one of today's ruins was once a great city or temple.

In Europe and America such migrations of population are virtually unknown. To be sure, there are remains of ancient Inca and Mayan capitals in Latin America, and north of the Rio Grande there are a few "ghost" towns which were once mining centers. But in general such abrupt and violent changes are foreign to us. The capital of England may have moved from Winchester to London, but Winchester did not fall into ruin. For a thousand years Paris has been a great city and,

* Two of the most remarkable of all Indian temple groups were not treated with any detail in the preceding chapter, since to have written of them as they deserve would have been to extend the chapter beyond an acceptable length. Of the two, it is impossible for me to say anything about Khajurao, since I was prevented from going there by the monsoons. Ellora and Ajanta I did manage to see, however, and there now follows a short chapter devoted to them.

for even longer periods, Athens, Rome, Venice, and Seville. It is difficult, then, for the Westerner to imagine what these catastrophic movements must mean to a people. Living as we do under the threat of atomic annihilation, we sometimes try to imagine an America without New York and an England without London, but the thought is so horrifying that we quickly put it aside. But in India such catastrophes are commonplace. There have been, for example, no fewer than seven Delhis. Not every new city followed a disaster, but for the establishment of nearly all of them, violent uprooting was required. And in virtually every part of India there are to be found the remains of formerly great cities, some of them, like the Vijayanagar capital at Hampi, creations of relatively modern times. The prevalence of these remnants of greatness must deeply affect the Indian character. In England historical monuments seem only to create a consciousness of the ancient traditions of the country, while in France they cause a preoccupation with "la gloire." In India there are also monuments of past greatness, such as the Taj Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri, and Ellora, of which an Indian can be proud, but most of the Indian ruins, like those of Cambodia and Java and Burma, evoke only a feeling of sadness and an awareness of the transience of life. Despite its hackneyed overtones there is some truth in the cliché about the wisdom of the ages which those in the East most particularly possess. It would be only to stress the obvious to comment further on this particular value the ancient ruins of India can have for us.

The area in the state of Hyderabad which contains Ellora and Ajanta is one of those remote and desolate places that must once have been flourishing. Aurangabad is the town to which the visitor first goes from Bombay in order to visit Ellora and Ajanta, and it is but one of several Moghul cities that prospered there from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. The countryside is now dry and barren, but once it must have been fertile enough to support the Moslem conquerors. Everywhere one goes in the area round about Aurangabad one encounters remnants of that civilization. Every village was once a walled fortress; Moslem tombs, now in ruins, were constructed everywhere over the countryside, and there is even a copy of the Taj Mahal in Aurangabad. The greatest of the cities of the district was Daulatabad, a fortress constructed with great engineering skill around the base of a natural hill of solid rock whose sides rise almost vertically from the ground. These ruins are quite unexpected, for what one goes to see in this part of the country are not the ruins of the Moslems but the much older Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain caves at Ellora and Ajanta.

These temples, like those at Udayagiri near Bhubaneswar, were caves carved

out of the mountains. Sites were chosen in the mountains partly because they were considered holy places. Mount Meru, like the Greek Olympus, was supposed to be the abode of the gods.

III

ELLORA

AND

AJANTA

At Ellora, which is only 18 miles from Aurangabad, and at Ajanta, which is a good deal further, these greatest of Indian caves were carved into the sides of solid rock hills. The earliest of them were cut in the second century B.C., but the site was in active use, and new temples were still being carved as late as the eighth century A.D. In addition to caves which served as temples, there were others carved as monasteries, most of them being used by Buddhist monks during the period of Buddhist dominance.

The Ellora caves have a less dramatic setting than those of Ajanta, but architecturally they are far more interesting. Cut in a line along an irregularly shaped granite hill, they are all raised at some height from the ground. There seems to be no special reason why this location was chosen, other than the fine view over the valley. The Ajanta caves, on the other hand, are arranged along the bend of a river and are carved into the steep bank which rises from the water below. Almost all of these caves can be seen at once from the point of entrance to the site, and from there one can easily imagine the group of religious men who came to this remote place to work with their hands for the greater glory of God and to establish there temples for worship and monasteries for contemplation.

Since the road to Ellora passes by so many Moghul ruins, one's mind is likely to be rather full of them by the time one reaches the caves. It is therefore something of a jolt mentally to move several centuries further back into history. The Moghul remains are more romantic—ruined domes of old tombs and high battlements recalling the wars of the Saracens—and at first glance, Ellora seems relatively insignificant. But it only requires the investigation of a few of the caves to realize the miracle wrought there by men as long as two millennia ago.

There are in all some thirty caves. The first dozen are Buddhist, and the greater proportion of these are *viharas* or monasteries. They vary considerably in detail, but the general pattern is that of a cave some 40 or 50 feet square and perhaps 12 feet high dug horizontally into the side of the mountain. Sometimes there is an outer wall which is left standing, and always there are columns placed in rows to support the roof. Everything, however, is one solid piece of stone, and the columns are not artificially constructed but are the portions of stone that remain from the clearing of the cave. These columns are sometimes square, sometimes round, but always they have delicate carved capitals and fine flutings. At the back of the cave there is

usually a shrine placed in an additional room cut deeper into the rock, and here there is a statue of the Buddha. The entrance to this shrine is often guarded by other carved figures in high relief.

Sometimes the caves are very large: Number 5, for example, which probably was the monastic refectory, is 117 feet deep. There are others with two or even three stories carved into the rock, and on each story there are carved columns and balustrades. Each of these caves is remarkable, and the carving out of so much stone must have required enormous patience. Two or three of the caves, however, deserve special mention.

Number 10 is interesting because of its shape, for instead of following the customary low rectangular pattern, it is relatively narrow, only about 30 feet wide, but is dug almost 90 feet inwards. One might imagine that the result would be a dark and gloomy hole, but the Buddhist architects overcame the lighting difficulty by carving a high vaulted ceiling which allows the perforation of windows high in the external façade and thus the admission of light. But the extraordinary thing about this temple is that it is almost exactly like a Christian church. One enters through the main door and finds a deep chamber surrounded on three sides by carved columns. Behind these columns runs a passageway reminiscent of the side aisles of a Christian church. The ceiling, which rises over 40 feet from the floor, is barrel-shaped, and ridges imitative of wooden beams are carved all along the vault. Above the main door is a gallery similar to the choir in certain Protestant Christian churches. Finally in the place correspondent to the Christian altar is a statue of the Buddha standing in front of a model stupa. This style of temple, of which several less interesting examples are found at Ajanta, is called a *chaitya* or chapel. The architectural source of this style is probably earlier structures made of wood which must have been curiously similar to early Christian churches. It is curious, too, that the wooden style should be so directly applied to a stone medium, for the amount of rock that must have been removed is prodigious, and the care that must have been exercised in the carving out of the dozens of delicate columns is hardly to be imagined today.

Another extraordinary temple is Number 15, one of seventeen Hindu caves at Ellora. This temple, which is also called the Dás Avatara or "The Ten Incarnations," is reached by climbing a flight of steps from the road below. At the top one enters an open courtyard which contains a small building, and opposite is a two-storied cave temple. The lower story of the cave is not deeply carved into the rock face, but the upper story has been dug 109 feet inwards. This upper temple is also almost 100 feet wide, and the roof is supported by six rows of seven columns each. These

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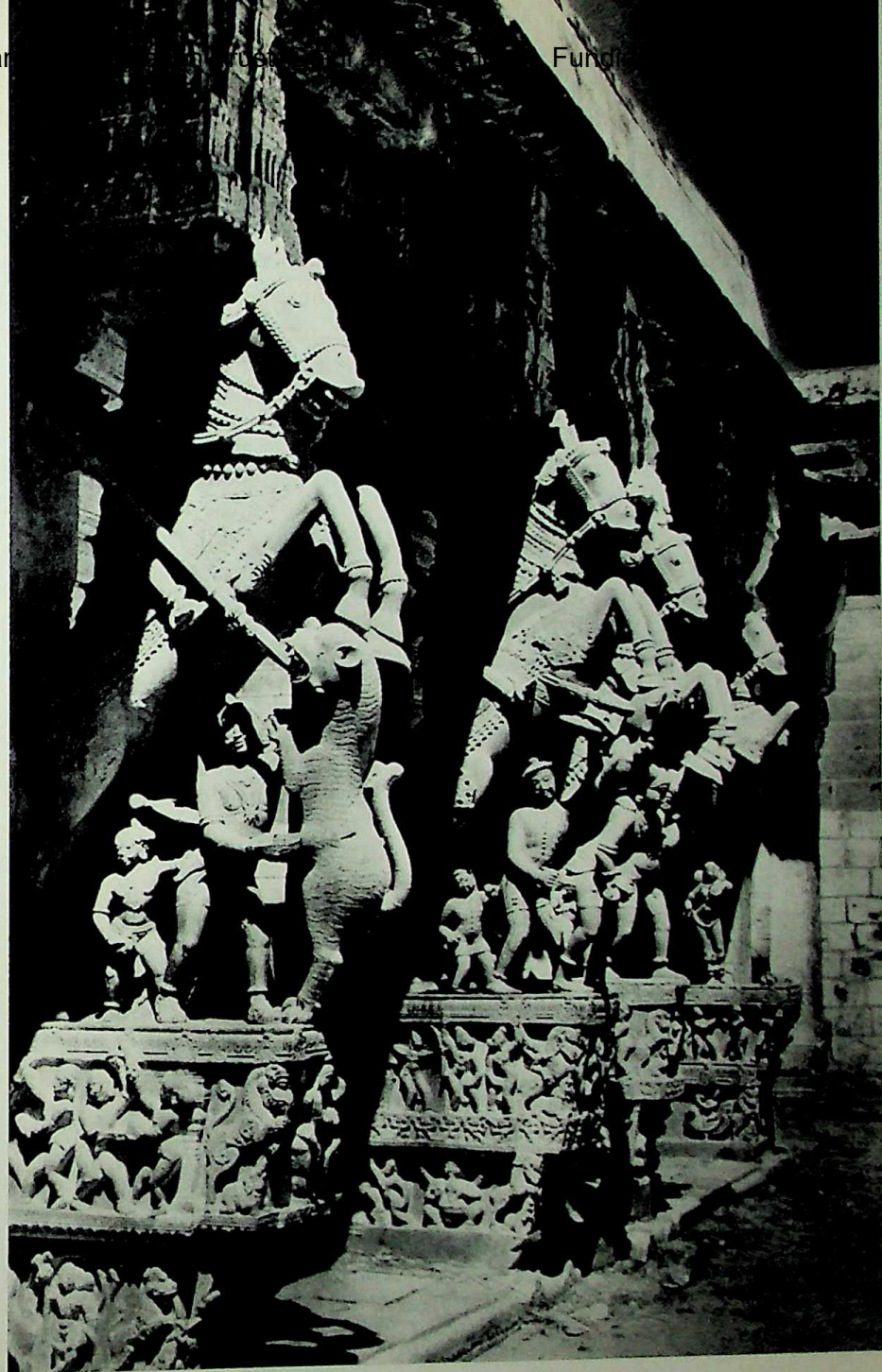
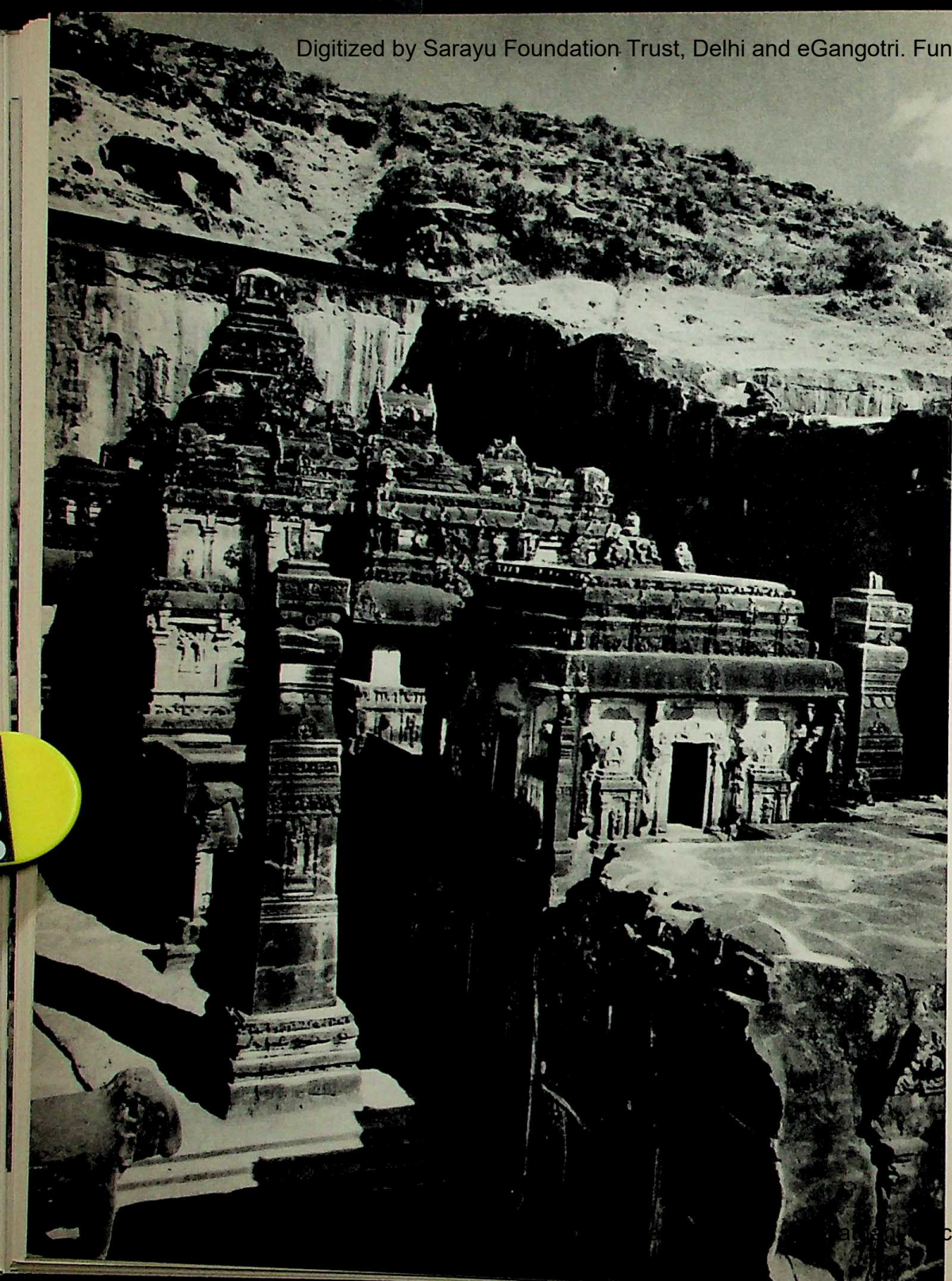
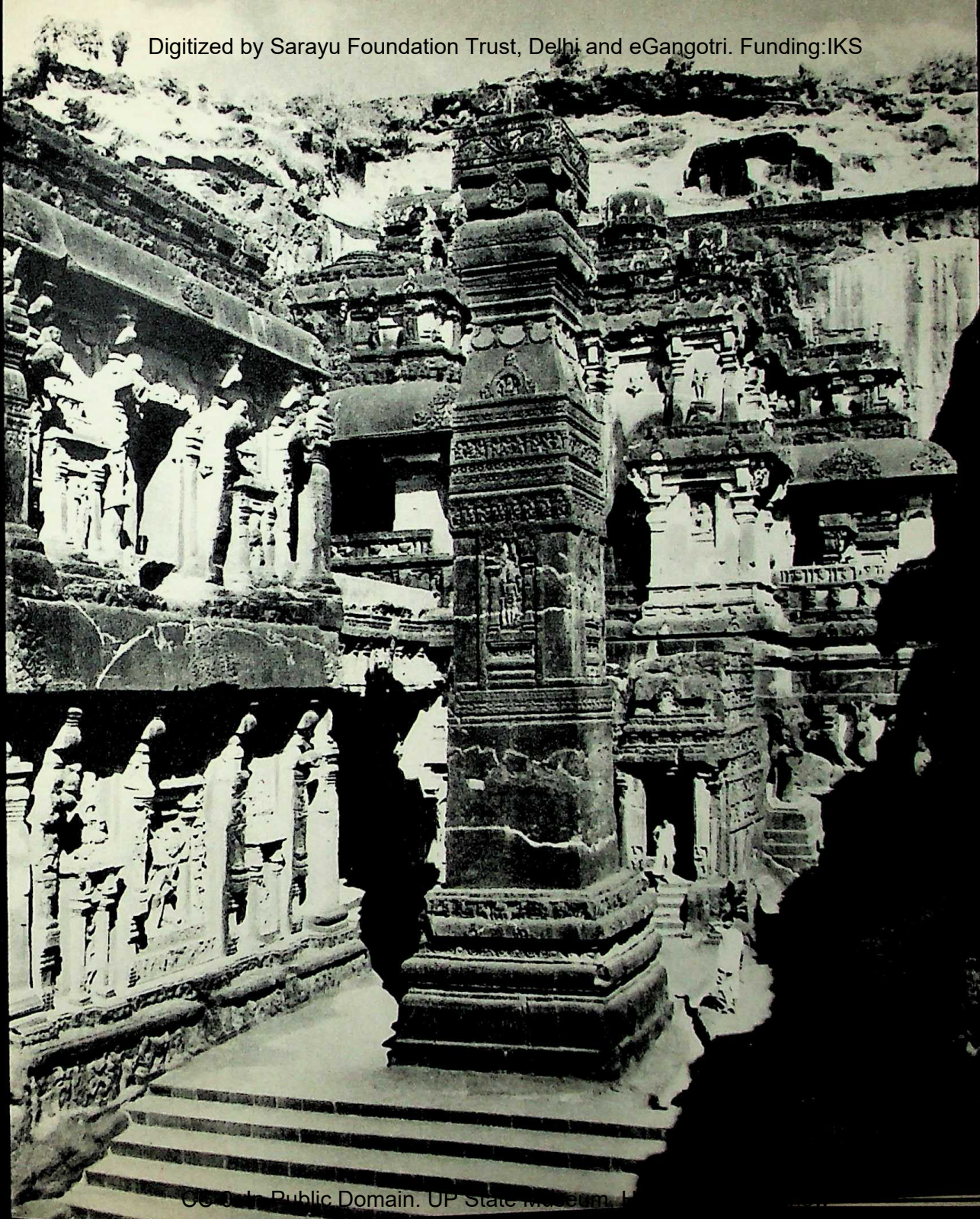


PLATE 43. *Vijayanagar columns, Sri Rangam Temple, near Tiruchirappalli.*



PLATES 44 & 45. *General views of Kailasa Temple, Ellora. (Courtesy of H.E. Miguel Serrano)*



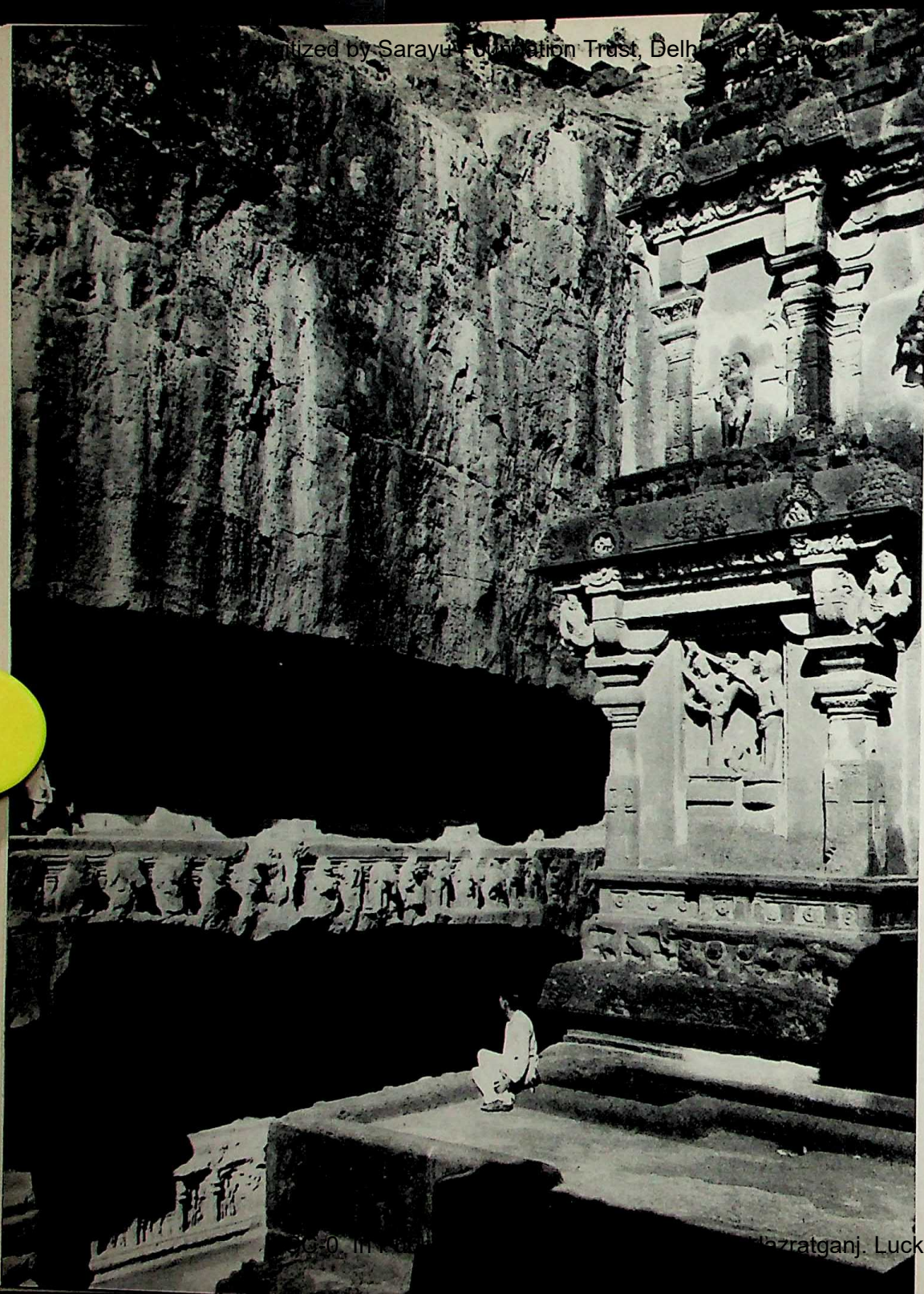


PLATE 46. *Detail of Kailasa Temple and gallery carved in rock face, Ellora.*
(Courtesy of H. E. Miguel Serrano)

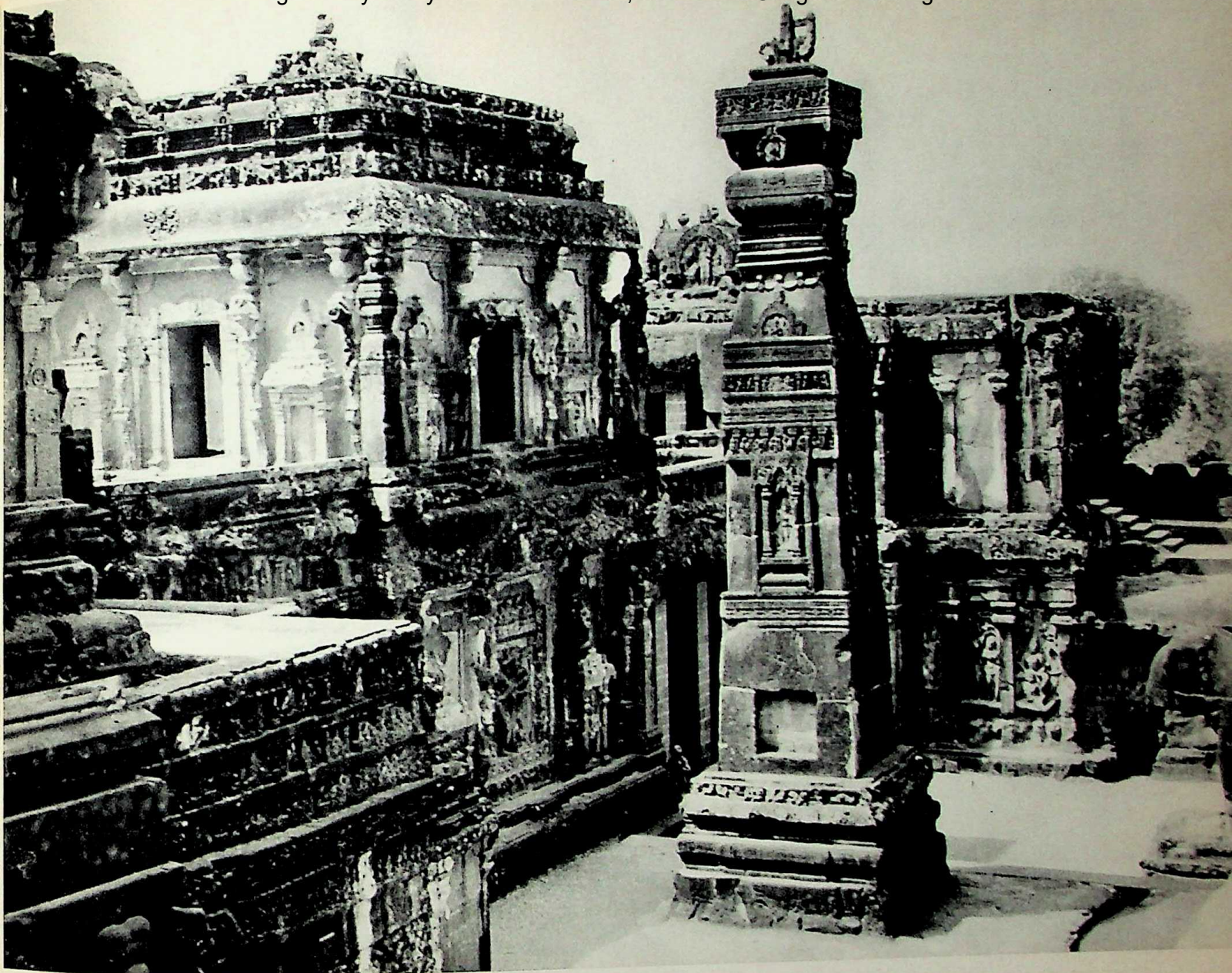


PLATE 47. Nandi Mandapam and column, Kailasa Temple, Ellora.
(Courtesy of H. E. Miguel Serrano)



PLATE 48. General view of Ajanta caves. (Photo by Eliot Elisofon)

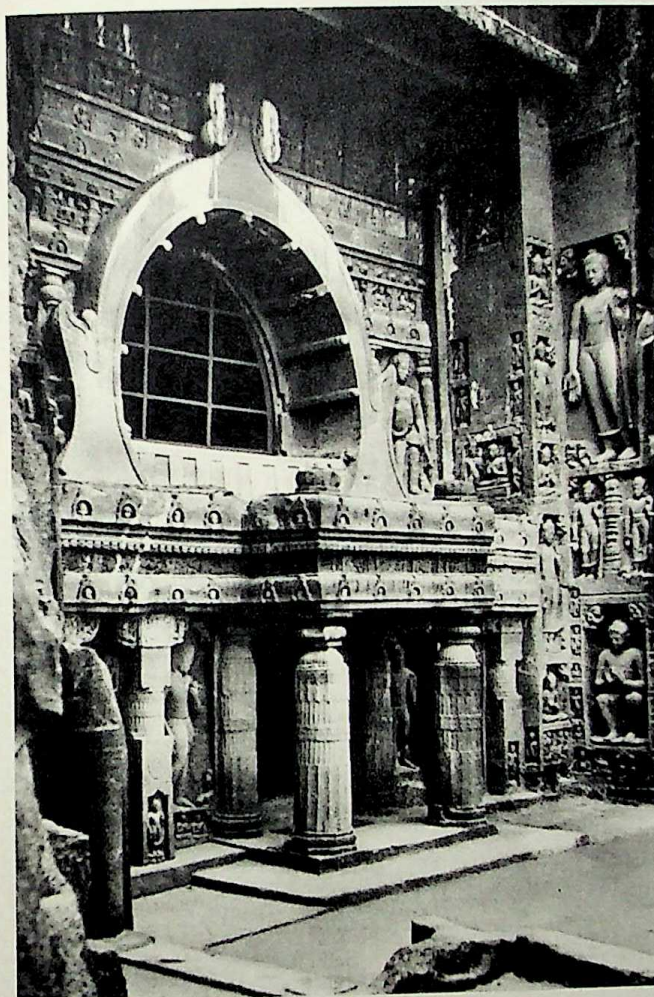


PLATE 49. Exterior of chaitya-style Cave Number 19, Ajanta.

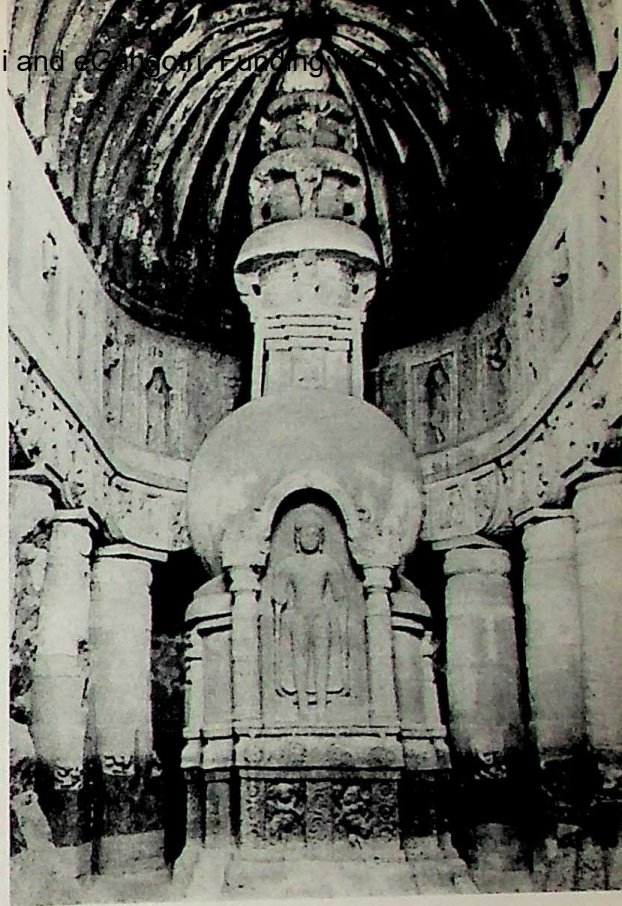


PLATE 50. Interior of chaitya-style Cave Number 19, Ajanta. (Courtesy of the Consulate General of India, San Francisco)

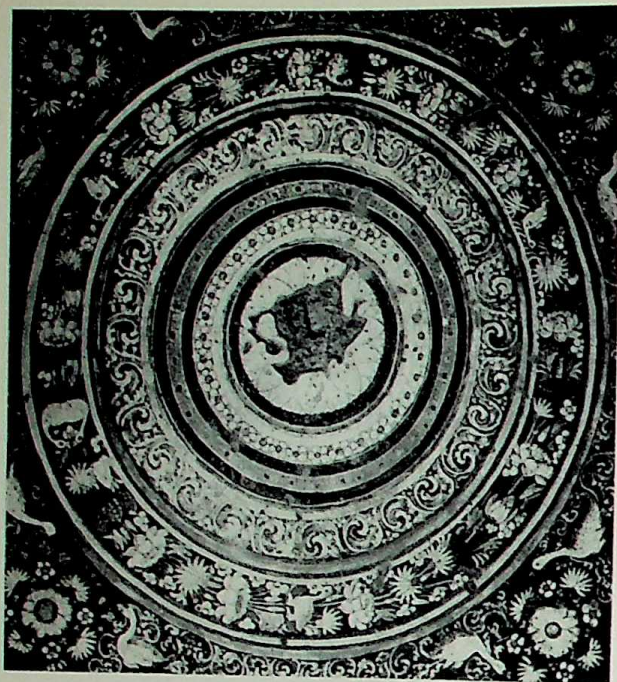


PLATE 51. Ceiling design, Cave Number 2, Ajanta.
(Courtesy of the Government of India Tourist Office,
San Francisco)

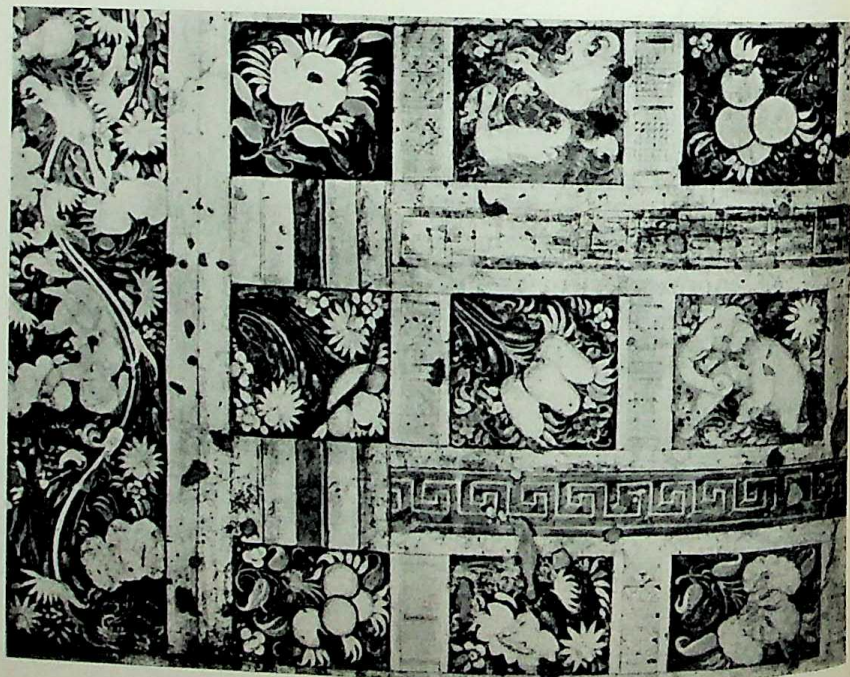


PLATE 52. Ceiling design, Cave Number 2, Ajanta.
(Courtesy of the New York Graphic Society)

heavy square columns are covered with geometric and representational designs, and the capitals are cut in an intricate pattern that resembles lace. They serve to lighten the massiveness of the stone pillars and introduce a gracefulness which one does not normally expect to find in a cave.

In addition to the columns, the Dás Avatara Temple has sculptured figures in groups carved into a number of niches along the sides of the cave. These represent many characters of Hindu mythology in familiar scenes: the marriage of Siva and Parvati, Vishnu resting on the multihooded naga or serpent, and Lakshmi with elephants dousing her with water. All of the many statues are executed with great skill and in detail even though they are larger than life size.

The most remarkable part of the temple, however, is the small chapel which stands in the courtyard. It is 50 feet square and about 15 feet tall, a whole house, in effect, complete with interior, roof, doors, and windows—entirely cut from one piece of rock. It is especially striking because it has an exterior as well as an interior, each covered with carvings. By any standards it is a handsome building. The fact that it was entirely carved from one piece of rock does not necessarily increase its beauty, but it indicates the extraordinary difficulties that had to be overcome before it could be completed.

If Ellora had only temples like those already mentioned and like the Jain temples, which are even more richly encrusted with carvings, it would be a remarkable enough place and worthy of visits from afar. But in addition to these many temples there is one, Number 16, the Kailasa Temple, which is so fantastic that it deserves to be considered among the wonders of the world.

This great temple is dedicated to Siva and was built, or rather carved, in the eighth century A.D. It is extraordinary because in addition to having the usual interior, it also has an exterior, complete with walls and roofs and towers cut from one enormous piece of rock without joints or connections of any sort. The 50-foot-square chapel at the Dás Avatara is remarkable enough, but it is dwarfed by the Kailasa. In order to create this temple, openings 100 feet high and 150 feet wide were cut 280 feet deep into the solid rock so that the temple would be open to the sky. In the center of this enormous courtyard a mountain of stone was left standing, and this in turn was carved and hollowed out to make the Kailasa Temple itself, a building measuring 164 feet in length by 109 in breadth and rising 96 feet from the floor of the cave.

As one approaches the Kailasa from the road, one first sees a tall screen of carved stone which blocks the temple from view, but once this is passed through, one comes into the hollowed-out courtyard. In the forecourt stands a two-storied

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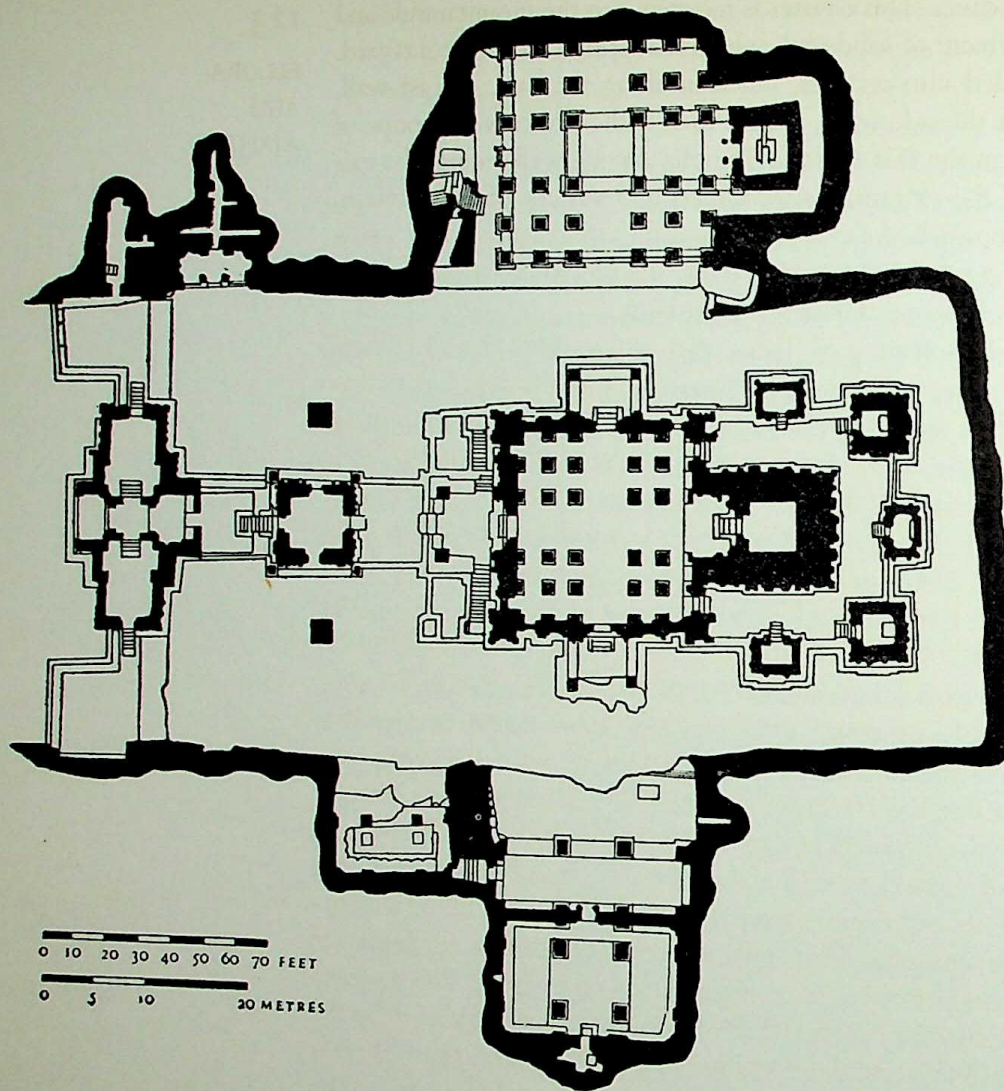


FIGURE 13. *Plan of Kailasa Temple at Ellora. (Courtesy of Penguin Books Ltd.)*

structure: a mandapam or chapel with a flat roof, which is dedicated to Nandi. At either side of it are two tall obelisks covered with carvings, and beyond them, next to the wall of the cave, are several sculptured groups of elephants. If, before entering the temple itself, one walks down the courtyard along the side of the temple, one sees that a deep gallery supported by pillars has been carved into the wall

of three sides of the open cave. This cloister is recessed into the mountainside and leaves a considerable overhang of solid rock which shades much of the courtyard. The gallery itself is divided into sections, nineteen along the back or east wall, and twelve along each of the side walls, and in each niche are carved groups of statuary not unlike those in the Dás Avatara Temple. As one walks along the gallery, one is conscious of the extraordinary richness and variety of the carvings. Indeed there is almost too much. At every few steps the eye is attracted by a new group of statues appearing on the inner wall, while the temple, seen through the columns, appears like a vast stone monster behind bars.

The temple itself is built on the top of a wide platform, some 15 or 20 feet high, whose vertical sides are carved in heavy relief with fantastic figures of elephants, lions, and Garudas. Underneath the two side porches of the temple, the sculpturing becomes even more complex, and large allegorical scenes, like those of a Bayeux tapestry, are carved into the gray rock. On this platform rests the temple. It is built in the early style of Hindu temple architecture and is heavily influenced by the Buddhist pagoda. In design it is similar to the Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram, although it is much larger. Basically it consists of two parts, the tower or vimana and audience hall. This audience hall is a square chamber with five entrances, two of which lead to the side porches, from which a view may be obtained of the cave as a whole. The roof of this chamber is flat, but the tower is constructed in five tiers, each one elaborately carved, and on the top is a dome in the shape of an open umbrella. Around the eastern or inner end of the temple, standing at a little distance from the main temple and on the edge of the platform, are five lesser temples or chapels, each with a triple-tiered roof.

To enter the temple it is necessary to go under the bridge which joins the main temple with the Nandi Mandapam. There two staircases rise through the platform to the western and principal porch of the temple. The carving on this porch is perhaps not of the high quality seen at Halebid, but the columns are handsomely fluted and capitated, and the human figures that decorate the walls are realistic and full of movement.

The interior of the audience chamber is relatively dark after the blaze of sun from outside, but light is admitted through grilled windows that have been carved into the outside walls. The roof of the chamber is supported by columns carved with geometric and natural designs, and the interior walls and ceiling are also covered with carvings. The principal shrine under the tower is small and dark, but it contains a beautifully preserved lingam.

Passing through the large chamber, one emerges on the terrace of the five

chapels, and here at close range one can study the thoroughness with which the walls of the temple were decorated with statuary in relief. Here in the niches are also found remnants of colored plaster which suggest that probably the temple was originally painted in bright colors.

It is difficult to give a picture of the magnificence of the Kailasa Temple or to transfer to the printed page the wonder one feels in looking at it. The fact that the Kailasa is constructed from one piece of stone and is what remains of the side of a mountain after 200,000 tons of rock had been removed is in itself extraordinary. But the Kailasa is no mere curiosity like the enormous gardens of the Tiger Balm "King" in Singapore or the Birla Temple in New Delhi. For in addition to accomplishing a physical feat almost as remarkable as the building of the pyramids, the workers at the Kailasa were also artists of a high degree of skill and perception, and they created in the Kailasa a building of great beauty.

After seeing Ellora, one will probably be disappointed, or at least be less impressed, by Ajanta. It is not that the caves are unimaginative or that the workmanship is sloppy; it is merely that after the Kailasa anything must seem something of an anticlimax. Having roughly the same number of temples as Ellora, Ajanta has few of comparable architectural or sculptural interest. Most of the Ajanta caves are small, and some are extremely plain. The most interesting caves from the point of view of sculpture and architecture are those—there are four or five of them—called chaitya or chapel caves, similar in shape to the long, narrow, and high-roofed Christian church. Some of these chaityas are large, and some contain handsome columns or interesting Buddhas, but none is quite as pleasing as the one example of this form found at Ellora.

Ajanta, however, is not famous for its sculpture and architecture but for its fresco paintings. These have attracted the notice of visitors for a long time, and it is to see them that one takes the arduous 60-mile journey from Aurangabad. Having come that far, one tends to expect something marvelous, and of course in a very obvious sense the frescoes are marvelous. But since the age of these paintings has not been established beyond doubt, one wonders whether they are as old as the caves themselves. The point is important, for if they are late works they are not especially remarkable as works of art. On the other hand, if they are really 2,000 years old, as everybody would like to think they are, they indicate that the secret of perspective and the ability to reproduce the human figure and face in a realistic manner were known at an astonishingly early date—long before such techniques were even contemplated in Europe.

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Whatever their age, these paintings certainly induce a sense of history. Suddenly, as it were, one is presented with life as it was hundreds and hundreds of years ago. The inspiration of the artists was predominantly religious, but they did not hesitate to include details from secular life. Thus a remarkable amount is revealed of the manners and customs of ordinary people at a remote period. One sees men and women eating, hunting, and worshipping. One sees the clothes they wore and the hair styles adopted by the women. Even though these frescoes are in bad repair, they provide a panorama of ancient life that is every bit as effective as a book of modern photographs. This is the great appeal of the figurative paintings at Ajanta: the moving sense of history one feels when one enters the caves containing frescoes. As is so often true, one finds that life has changed very little over the centuries. Then as now women were concerned with making themselves attractive; then as now men were irresistibly attracted to the hunting of wild animals.

The Ajanta painters evidently intended their frescoes to be complementary to the architecture and sculpture of the cave temples. The columns and carved statues were merely colored over, usually in rather stark red or blue or yellow, while along the walls, and especially near the central shrine of the temple, human or divine subjects were painted as in a mural. On the ceilings, however, an entirely different style was sensibly adopted, for instead of figurative paintings like those of Renaissance Europe, the paintings on the ceilings of the Ajanta caves are in geometric designs. Naturally they invoke no sense of history, but what they indicate is the good taste and color sense of these ancient painters.

Some of these ceilings resemble Persian carpets, and there is often a circular pattern in the center surrounded by rectangles of various colors. At the center a lotus flower is normally found, and the circles and lines that emanate from it therefore have a religious significance. Some of the designs, such as those in Cave Number 17, include figurative patterns, and like the famous moonstones of Anuradhapura, the circles in this ceiling design are made up of human, half-human, and half-animal figures arranged round the center.

Elsewhere on the ceilings, however, especially over the passageways around the sides of temples, there is more original geometric work. Here one finds the remarkable sense of the symmetrical and the nonsymmetrical that these ancient painters possessed. As a general rule, these lesser portions of the ceiling are divided into rectangles, but unlike much Moslem work, which also deals with rectangles, there is no deadness or slavishness to pattern in these Buddhist temples. The most frequently used colors in the designs are brown, blue, black, and white, which are also the favorite colors of the Javanese batik makers. These colors are alternated so

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that, for example, in parallel rows of squares the white design, which is the most noticeable among the browns and blacks, moves in zigzag fashion from square to square. This pattern may continue for three or four pairs of rectangles, but invariably it is broken by having two white designs placed side by side in the next pair. Thus, in this way, although the ceiling design follows a geometric pattern in its over-all design, it introduces variety within this plan so that the general effect will be imaginative and not mechanical.

It is a simple enough pattern, but what is astonishing is that our present-day designs should be so similar to those used by these ancient painters. The patterns once used at Ajanta reappear today in the wallpapers and hand-blocked materials that one finds in the most elegant shops in the Faubourg St. Honoré or Fifth Avenue.

In this way, then, Ajanta is as remarkable as Ellora as an illustration of the life of the ancient Buddhist and Hindu monks who went to the remote hills of India to carve and paint temples for their gods and to establish monasteries beside them for their own use. Ajanta indeed is the more human place. At Ellora, especially at the Kailasa Temple, it is hard to realize that men created such works of art. One is inclined to think that only supermen or magicians could create such temples. One feels almost too keenly, that is to say, the fanaticism that must have driven them to such remarkable work. But at Ajanta, where some of the monastic caves still contain the stone beds and pillows used by the monks, and where there is a cave temple that somehow was never completed, and where, more especially, one is presented through the paintings with all the human aspects of life, one feels more relaxed and sympathetic, for human beings and not giants have walked there. That, perhaps, is why it is necessary to visit both Ellora and Ajanta.

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SIX · ANURADHAPURA AND POLONNARUWA

WHEN ONE thinks of Ceylon today one thinks of a small island, almost an appendage of India, which is famous for its elephants and wild life but which stays agreeably quiet and obscure in a noisy and turbulent world. Yet over two thousand years ago, Ceylon—or Lanka as it was then called—was one of the richest and most powerful countries of the East. It had an irrigation scheme so vast that virtually all of the country was under cultivation; it exported its products to many other lands; it had become, furthermore, the world capital of Buddhism after the children of the Indian king, Asoka, converted the island. It is fitting, therefore, that such a country should once have had a great capital which even today can give evidence of a standard of living and a religious fervor that have rarely been equaled in history.

Before speaking of the city of Anuradhapura and the ruins that remain from it, it would be wise to mention a feature of the economic life of the country that has never been as fully developed elsewhere in the world. In the East, where the heavy rains of the monsoons alternate with long dry periods, the principal agricultural difficulty is to preserve the water of the wet season and make it serve the farmer all the year round. In many parts of Asia—in Burma, India, and Cambodia—nothing really is done about this problem, with the result that there is only one crop of rice a year, and for six or seven months the land is dry and barren. In Ceylon, however, two and a half millennia ago the reigning kings determined to do something about this recurring dilemma, and therefore they constructed a system of artificial lakes, called tanks, all over the island. This scheme, far more complex and thorough

than the Tennessee Valley system in the United States, provided storage places for the water so that during the dry season it could be slowly drawn off to irrigate the land of the various districts. The skill with which these tanks were built was recently demonstrated when, after 2,500 years, it became necessary to repair a breached section of one of the artificial retaining walls. It was then found that there were some sixteen different layers of material from clay to pebbles to boulders so arranged as to prevent leakage. All of this work was done by hand, and these tanks, which are in reality artificial lakes several miles long and wide, brought great prosperity to Lanka.

To illustrate the difference of prosperity between then and now, one need only remark that in 500 B.C. Ceylon was exporting rice to China, whereas in the present century it has to import wheat and rice. In 500 B.C. the tank and irrigation scheme was working perfectly. Today, even with caterpillar tractors and all the help provided by modern engineering, the Ceylonese cannot even operate the irrigation scheme built and operated by their forefathers over 2,000 years ago. For those who like to talk about progress, such facts should be sobering.

Further evidence to discourage the optimist may be found among the remains of the old capital city of Anuradhapura, for here are signs of a manner of living that must have been sophisticated and agreeable. The building methods alone have not been equaled by any of the hundred generations which have followed.

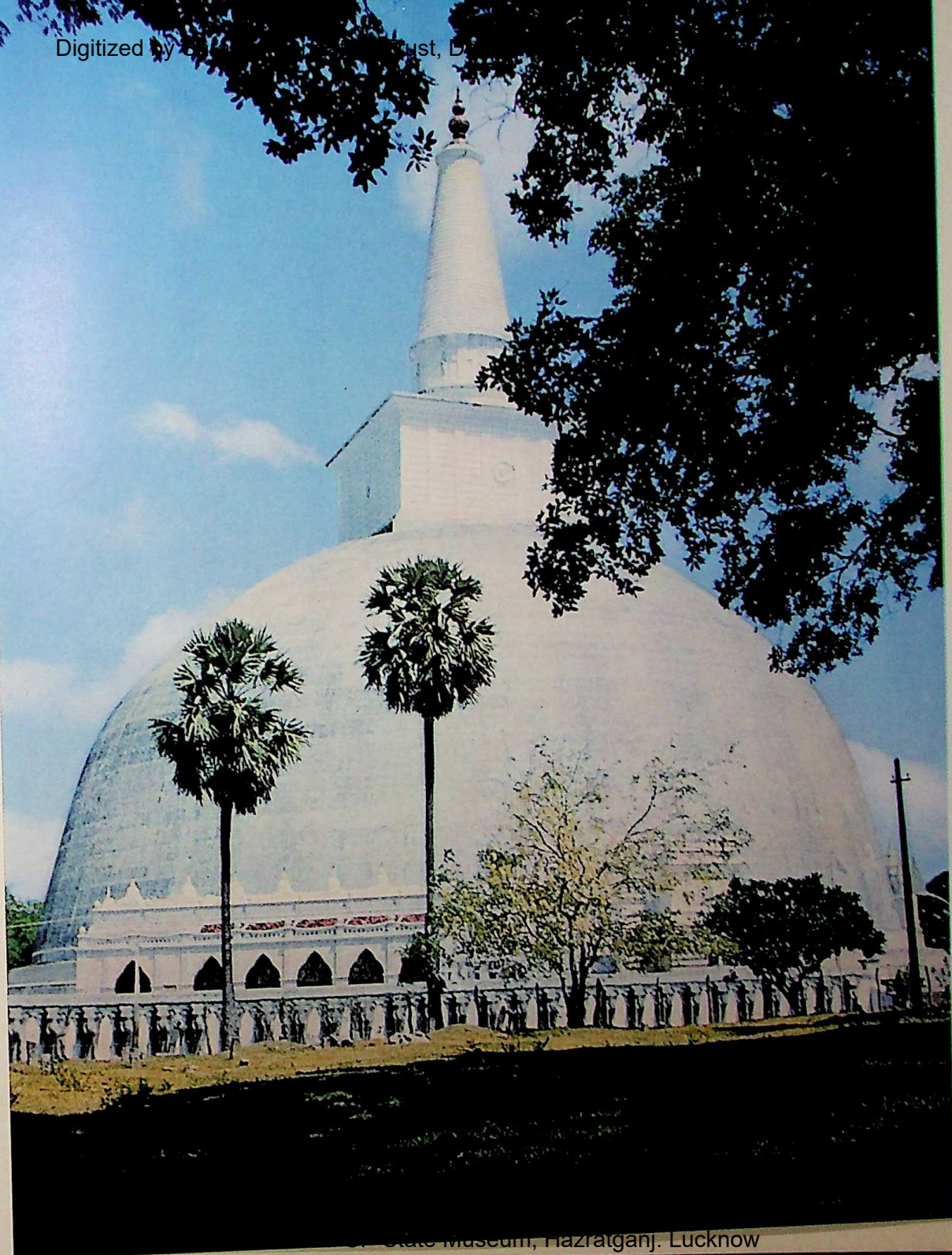
In many respects, Anuradhapura is a beautiful site. Located in north central Ceylon, where there are many trees and grass where cattle may graze, it is a peaceful place, and a small village now exists where once the great capital stood. Round about the village, in the fields that lead up to the big artificial lakes, lie most of the ruins. But these fields are not the barren stretches that one finds at Pagan or Angkor. Here tall shade trees bring a lushness to the countryside, and everything is green and rich. Exploring the ruins of Anuradhapura is like walking through a well-kept English park. The cool breeze from the lakes and the soft grass and comfortable shade of the place are of course a heritage from the past and a result of the ancient irrigation system.

Dominating the site, and standing out above all the other ruins are the four great Buddhist stupas, or dagobas as they are known in Sinhalese. They are what one first sees upon arrival—vast humps of brick and cement rising high over the tops of the trees. One of these dagobas, the Ruanweli, has been restored and is painted white. Its huge rounded dome, surmounted by a square box and a spire that looks like a furled umbrella, glistens in the sun over the water of the lake. It is obviously the principal religious monument of the city. The three other large dagobas are in

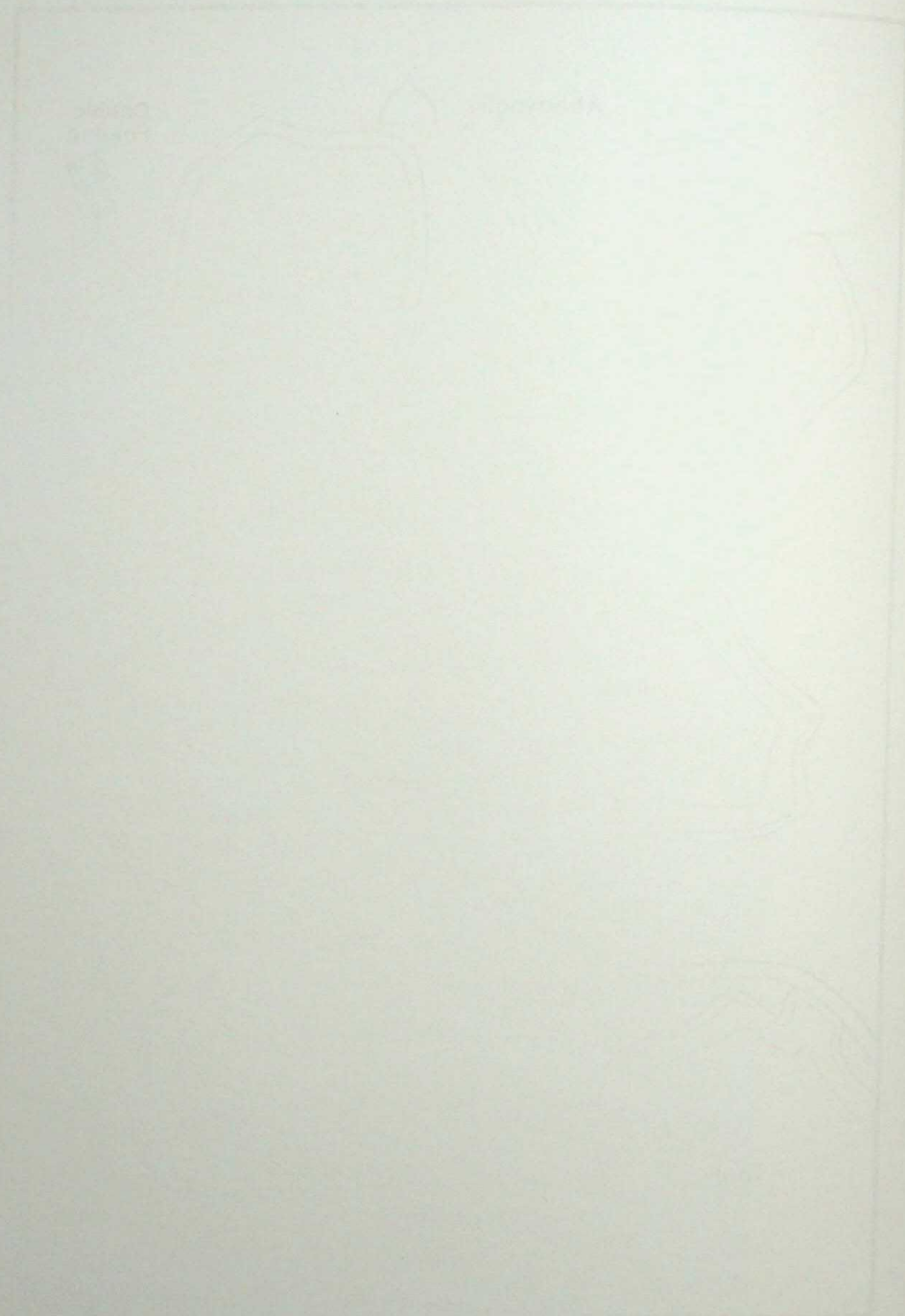
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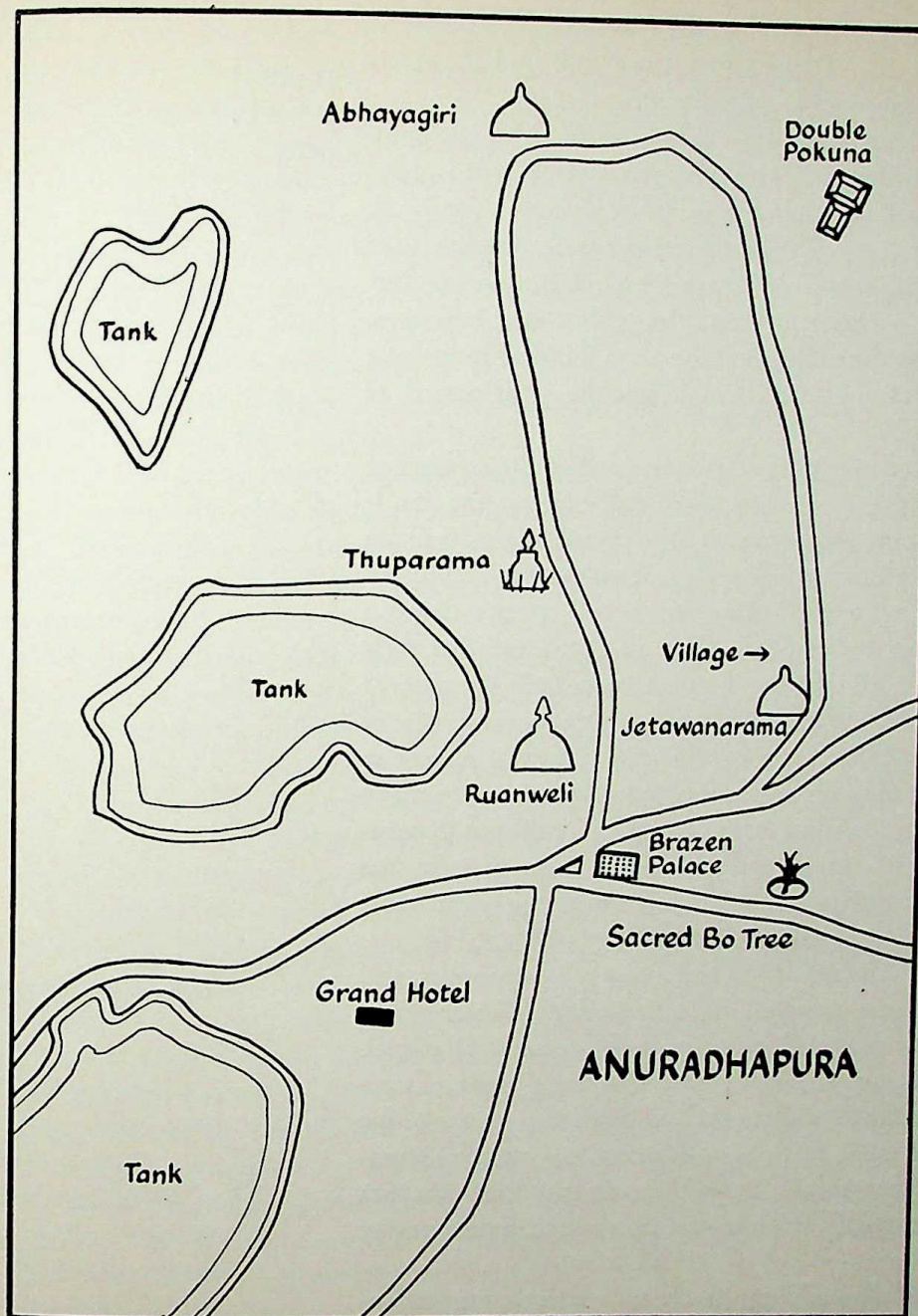
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PLATE 53. *Ruanweli Dagoba,
Anuradhapura.*



State Museum, Hazratganj, Lucknow





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FIGURE 14. Map of Anuradhapura.

ruins, and although they are as large as or larger than the Ruanweli, they are now only a mottled mixture of the red brick of which they were built and the green shrubs which have climbed up and sprouted from their sides.

As one walks about, one has to keep reminding oneself of the great antiquity of the buildings at Anuradhapura, for the skill with which they were built and the state of their preservation make it hard to remember that they are over 2,000 years old. One hears today of the great feats of engineering being accomplished in China merely because a strong-willed people volunteer for all of the twenty-four hours of the day in order to build, virtually by hand, huge dams and buildings. The same spirit, but one governed by the precepts of the Lord Buddha, must have inspired the Ceylonese of the first century A.D., which was the great period of Anuradhapura.

The guidebook gives some quaint comparative figures regarding the number of bricks used in the Abhayagiri Dagoba, the largest of all the stupas at the site. It states that there are so many bricks in the dagoba that they would form a wall ten feet high and one foot thick reaching from Edinburgh to London. Such comparisons are of course a trifle foolish, but it is worth noting that these Ceylonese dagobas are larger than all of Egypt's pyramids except the three at Gizeh and that their bases cover several acres of ground. All of these dagobas were built to preserve relics of the Buddha, and the devotion expended in their construction is a sign of the passion of which the ancient Sinhalese were capable. The effect of having so many of them—there are others in addition to the four great stupas—is to make the ancient city of Anuradhapura seem almost inconceivably magnificent in comparison to modern cities. Rangoon, for example, has one great pagoda, the Shwedagon, but 2,000 years ago Anuradhapura had four pagodas of comparable size.

It is said that the original city of Anuradhapura covered 256 square miles, and almost everywhere within this vast area there are ruins to be found. Some of the ruins may be little more than a few monolithic pillars or the remains of a brick foundation, but whether they are along the side of a road, under a grove of trees in a field, or incorporated into a modern building, they all provide evidence of the vastness of the city that once existed there. It is a hazardous business guessing populations, but, on the basis of the ruins that remain, it would appear that Anuradhapura must have had a population of at least half a million—rather more than present-day Colombo.

As at Angkor and Pagan, most of the buildings that remain are religious monuments. The most obvious of these are, of course, the enormous dagobas, but in

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addition there are hundreds of other remains of what must have been temples and monasteries. Dwelling houses and palaces were probably made of wood or of adobe and thatch, as they are made to this day, and they were probably arranged in streets on what are now pleasant shaded lawns that reach down to the tanks.

The four great dagobas dominate the city as they must have done originally. Like the Sule Pagoda at Rangoon, they were probably placed at important street junctions, and thus united the city by being visible as landmarks from some distance. The largest of the four dagobas is 327 feet in diameter, and when it was in perfect condition it was 270 feet tall, but it is now some 20 feet less. The restored Ruanweli is smaller—about 250 feet in diameter and 180 feet tall. The largest of these monuments is bigger than anything in eleventh-century Pagan, and they are all larger than the Taj Mahal at Agra.

Each dagoba was constructed in the center of a wide square platform paved with huge stones. Some, like the Ruanweli, appear to have been surrounded by a moat, and the Ruanweli has a frieze of elephants' heads that runs around the outer edge of the platform. The walls of the dagoba rise vertically above two or three rings of supporting brick walls at the base. The vertical rise is sufficiently prolonged so that the top of the dagoba is not visible from the base. It is necessary to move some distance away to see the dagoba as a whole. Gradually the vertical walls move inward towards the center and form a dome that looks like an inverted bowl. From the top of the dome rises a plain square box, also of solid brick, and this is surmounted by a spire resembling a furled umbrella, which supports the final golden spire or htic. Over all of the brickwork a layer of cement was spread to provide a smooth surface for the white paint with which it was painted.

This design, then, which is the original pattern for the Buddhist pagoda, is extremely simple and straightforward. What little decoration there is takes the form of small chapels that are either affixed to the base of the dagoba itself or placed here or there on the stone platform. However plain the design is, the sight of the white Ruanweli Dagoba—with the tower of the even taller Jetawanarama beyond it—seen through the trees or across a small inlet of the lake is undeniably magnificent. The eye is automatically drawn to these enormous piles of brick, not merely because of their size but also because of their aesthetic appeal. The Sinhalese style of pagoda has little of the grace of the slender Siamese style; nevertheless, it has a solid grandeur that the later ones lack. One senses, too, the immediate purpose of the Ceylonese dagoba. It would appear that the architect, having been told to build the most solid structure he could design in order to house the sacred relics, set about doing just that, yielding only at the end to a lighthearted desire for decoration.

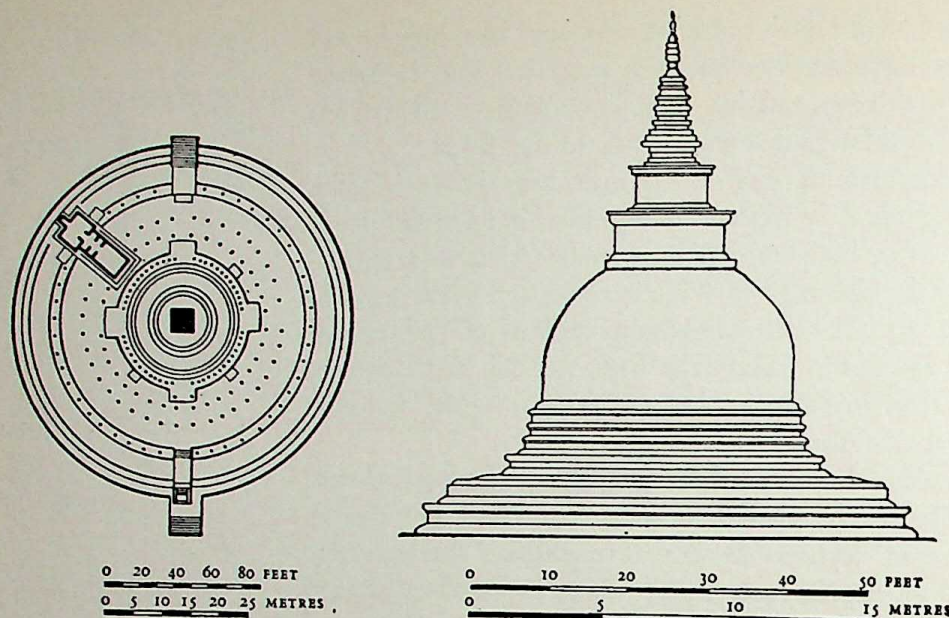


FIGURE 15. Plan of Thuparama Dagoba. (Courtesy Penguin Books Ltd.)

Only when the great solid block was built would he tolerate a square tower or an umbrella-shaped spire. Thus the dagobas are functional structures, and they reflect the almost puritanical simplicity which one detects in all Sinhalese art. It is fitting that the Ruanweli and the other dagobas were covered merely with cement and whitewash, and one senses why the Shwedagon in Rangoon, for example, needs its gold covering.

Another interesting feature of the Sinhalese dagoba can be seen in some of the smaller ones at Anuradhapura. The Thuparama, for example, which lies a few hundred yards to the north of the Ruanweli and which is, moreover, the oldest dagoba in all of Ceylon, follows the usual design for the dome but in addition has three concentric rows of stone columns around the base. Today many of these columns are missing and a number of them lean at irregular angles, so that the effect is not what it should be, but one can easily imagine the rows of protective pillars as they must originally have stood. These monolithic columns are at least 20 feet tall and are surmounted by capitals carved in the shape of crowns. Their function seems purely decorative, and they relieve some of the severity of the design of the dagoba itself.

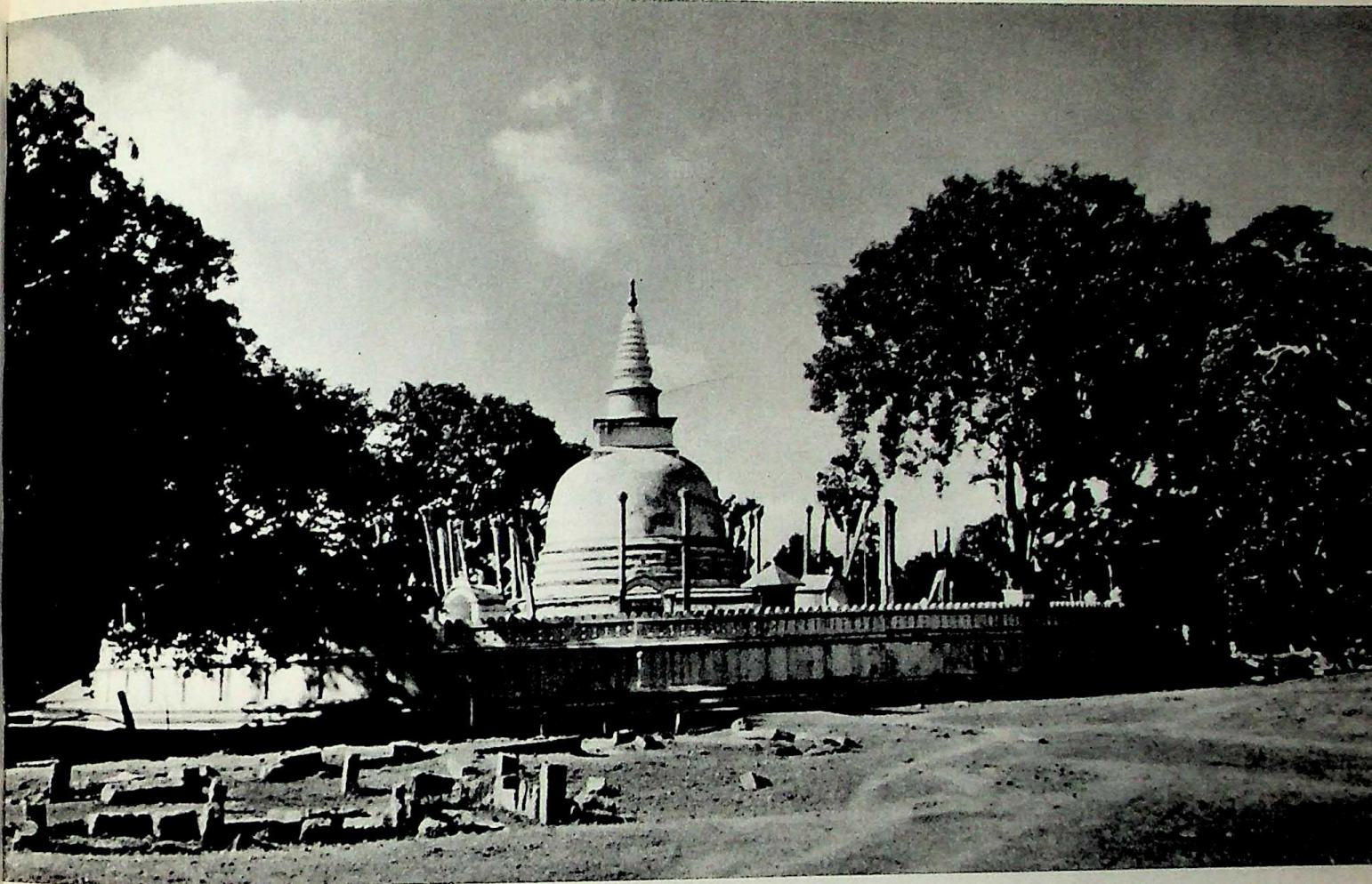


PLATE 54. *Thuparama Dagoba, Anuradhapura.*

PLATE 55. *Monastery or temple, Anuradhapura.*

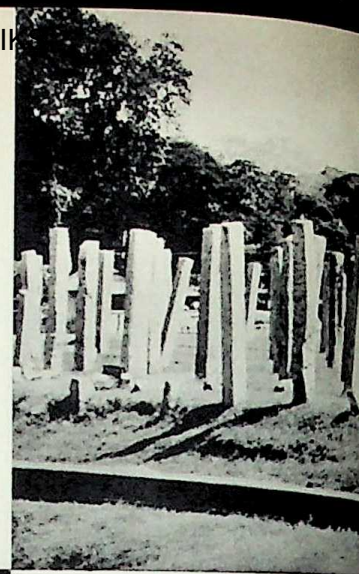


PLATE 56. *Brazen Palace, Anuradhapura.*

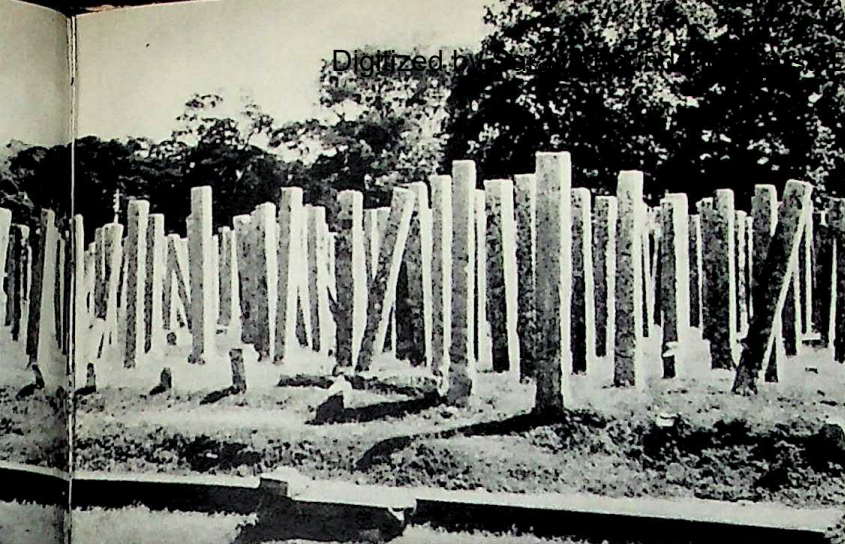


PLATE 57. *Steps into pokuna, Anuradhapura.*



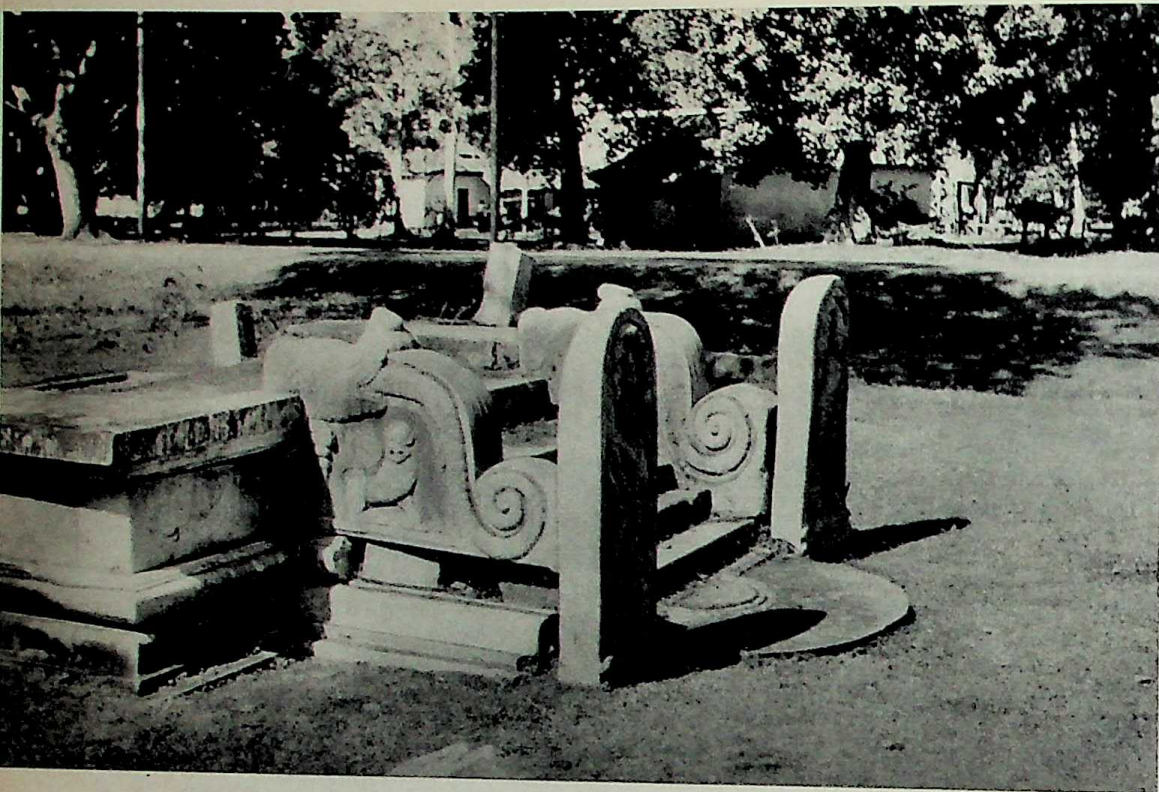


PLATE 58. *Balustrade and steps of small temple, Anuradhapura.*

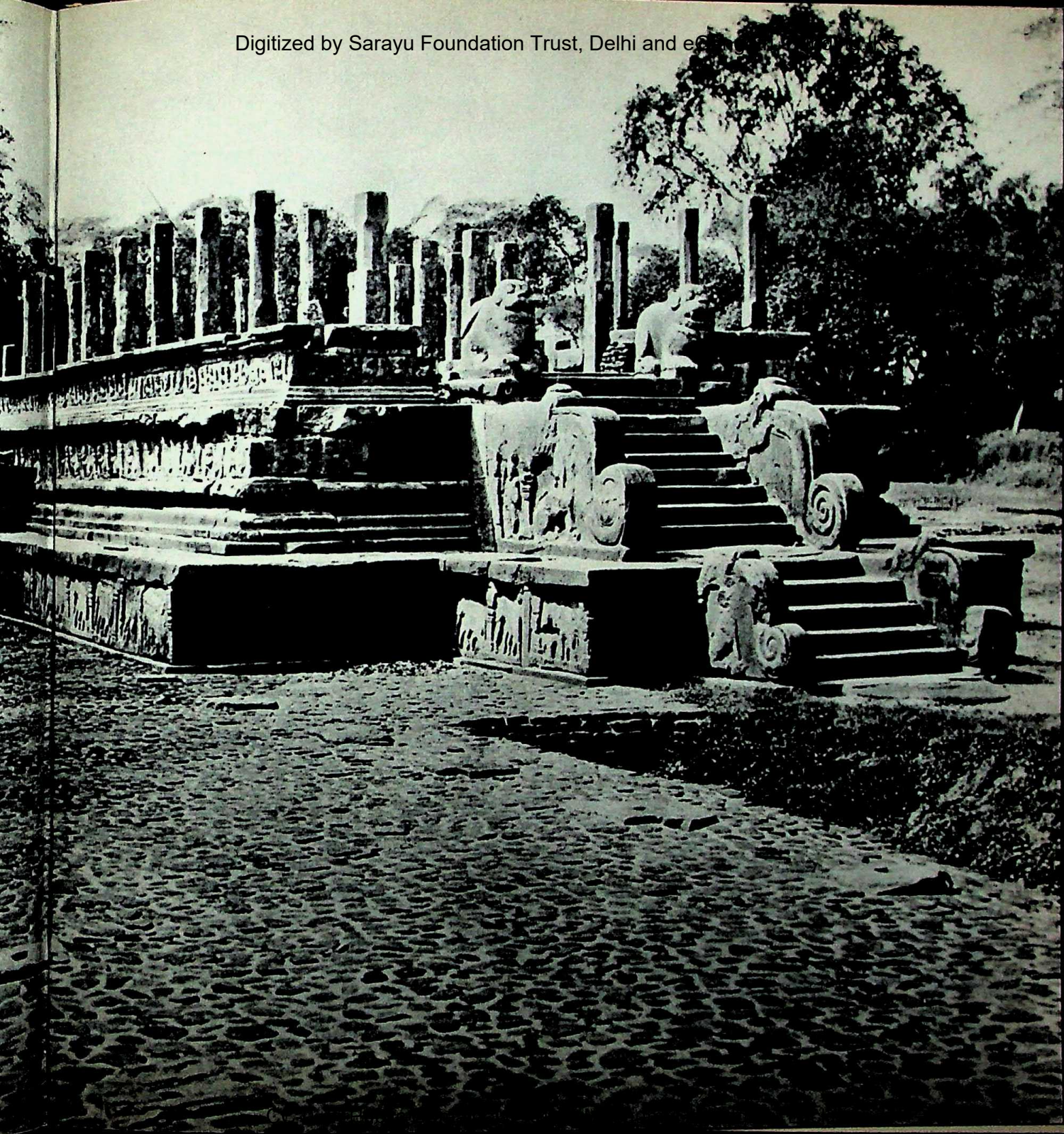
PLATE 59. *Guardian figures on staircase, Anuradhapura.*



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PLATE 60. *Elephant Pavilion, Polonnaruwa.*
(Courtesy of the Ceylon Tea Center, London)





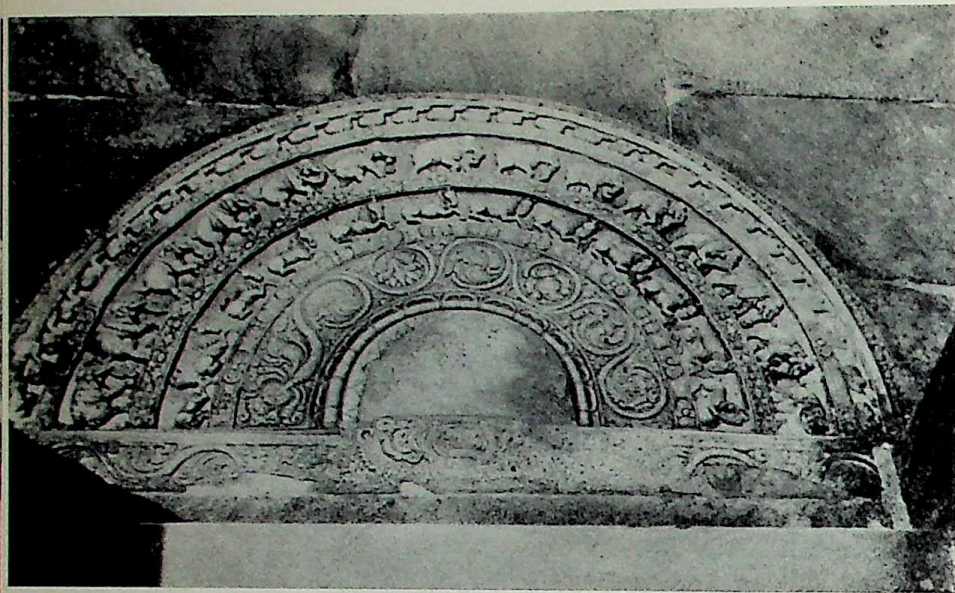


PLATE 61. *Moonstoone, Elephant Pavilion, Polonnaruwa.*

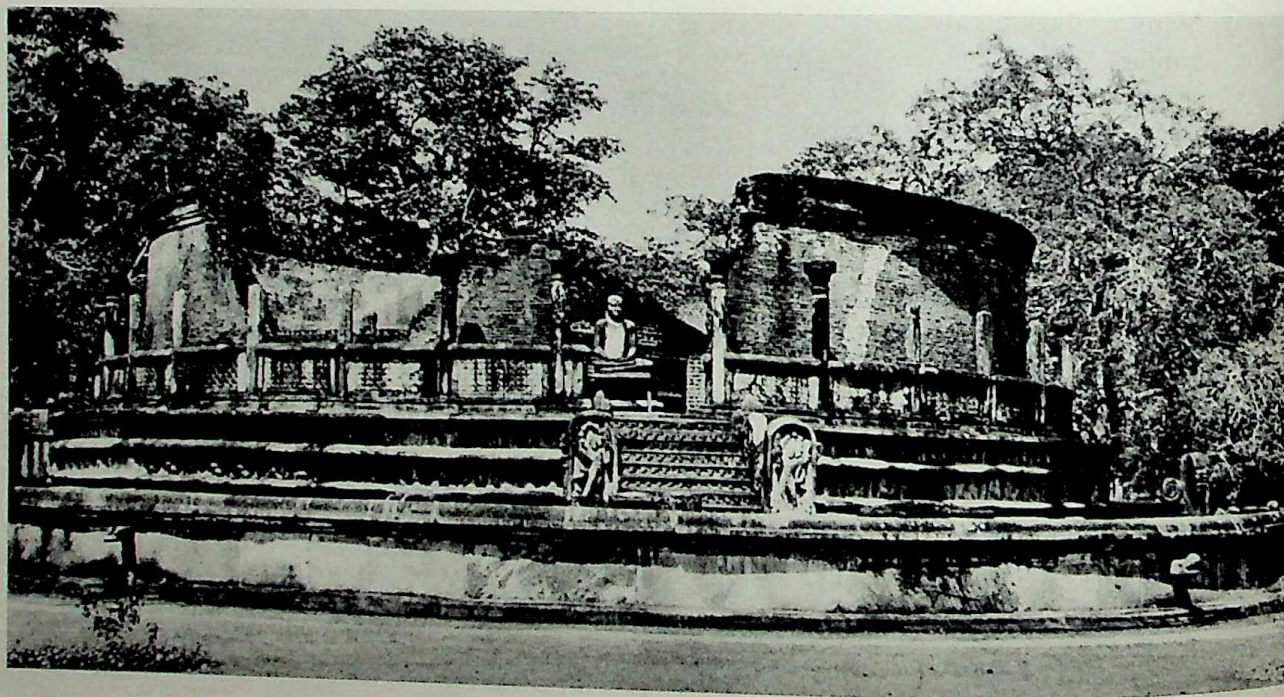


PLATE 62. *Wata Dage Temple, Polonnaruwa.*

Both history and religion are united in the dagobas of Anuradhapura and add to their interest. It is historically true, for example, that the Ceylonese pagoda set the style for religious art throughout the greater part of the East. The whole of Hindu temple architecture in south India derives from the pagoda, and the pagodas of Burma, Thailand, and Indo-China are essentially developments of the Sinhalese pattern. The historical role which the art of Ceylon has played in the East is thus a very important one. Nor should the role be confined to art, for as at St. Peter's in Rome, where one feels oneself to be at the heart of Christendom, so at Anuradhapura one feels that one is visiting the great fountainhead of Buddhism. While that is partly an emotional reaction, it is in fact true that, together with the Bodhgaya in India and the Shwedagon in Burma, Anuradhapura is one of the great Buddhist shrines of the world.

The dagobas are the principal and the most obvious monuments of Anuradhapura, but as at Pagan and Ayudhya, there are many more. Among the other ruins are those which must have been temples. The guidebook states that all of the other ruined buildings were once monasteries but, although some of them doubtless were, the evidence is conclusive that a considerable number of them were temples. Most of them have antechambers facing towards the east, and in the main chamber there are frequently remains of a base for a statue of the Lord Buddha. Many of these buildings were probably used as private chapels for rich or noble families, and some indeed must have been royal temples, though today it is impossible to distinguish these from the others. Generally these temples are octagonal in shape, and frequently they were built in groups of five or six around a central shrine, with subsidiary temples at each corner and at the entrance to the compound. Little remains of these temples except the entrance staircases and rows of monolithic stone columns that must originally have supported wooden or thatch roofs. Some of these columns are 20 feet tall, but most of them are only about half that height. On the whole they are roughhewn square pillars and are devoid of carving or other decoration except for the capitals, which are usually cut in geometric patterns that also include human figures.

While the columns tend to be plain and uninteresting, the staircase, bannisters, and "moonstones" show a high degree of artistic skill. The steps themselves are smoothly cut and fitted into the side supports, which are also of solid granite. At the top of the steps is a dragon's head, and the rail of the bannister which descends from there takes the form of the dragon's tongue, which curls up at the bottom. At the foot of the steps and sometimes, if the staircase is in two parts, at the central landing as well, there is a flat stone in the shape of a half moon. These moonstones

are a feature apparently peculiar to Ceylonese art and are attractively designed with concentric circles carved around a central lotus flower. In the various rings that circle this hub are carved figures of animals and flowers. On several stones the outer ring consists of a repeated series of elephants, horses, lions, and bulls; the next circle contains floral scrollwork and the third, a row of twelve ducklings.

There is variation in these pink-colored moonstones, but the temples are on the whole constructed according to an unvarying pattern. At the base of the staircases, for example, there are frequently pairs of oval-topped panels which lean against the furred tongue of the dragon. These are decorated with guardian figures carved in one of two designs: either they are jolly-looking fat men or they are two rather languorous dancing girls or Apsaras. No other figures are ever used.

It is foolish, however, to overemphasize the seeming rigidity of the Anuradhapura style, for in fact the nagas or cobras of Angkor are as mannered as anything in Ceylon. Still, the variety at Angkor is greater than at Anuradhapura, and it is interesting to speculate whether the civilization that flourished at Anuradhapura was excessively rigid and authoritarian or not.

There are of course a number of buildings which are individualistic. One of these is the so-called Brazen Palace, which once was a monastery of many stories and later the residence of one of the kings. All that remains today is a mass of monolithic columns, some 1,600 in number in forty rows of forty columns. They are a strange sight now, for they seem so utterly purposeless, as though a child had amused himself with sticking matches into the earth. But the fact that stone remains—and often in its original position—while brick decays is one of the lessons of Anuradhapura. Brick is known to be one of the most ancient of building materials, and whole cities along the Indus River were built of nothing but brick. At Anuradhapura, brick played its most important part in the great dagobas, which are solid mountains of brick. In addition it was used as wall filling between the stone columns. At Polonnaruwa, the second great capital of Ceylon, one finds many remains of brick, for there it has not yet been worn away. The evidence there suggests that Anuradhapura must also have been largely a brick city.

The Brazen Palace of the second century B.C. stands very close to one of the great relics of Buddhism: the Bo tree which sprouted out of a cutting from the Bo tree under which the Buddha himself is supposed to have meditated. Although it is an immensely old tree, supported by crutches and dating from the founding of Anuradhapura itself, it is disappointing. The makeshift temple built around it is artistically unpleasing, as are the modern, mustard-yellow statues of the Buddha

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that reside in shrines nearby. Since, however, it is probably the oldest historical tree in the world, it deserves one's respect.

Far more interesting are the small tanks one finds scattered here and there in the forest. Some of them doubtless had religious purposes as baths of purification like those one finds today in Hindu temples on the mainland, but other *pokunas*, as they are called, were probably only used for drinking and ordinary bathing. The most magnificent one at Anuradhapura is found some distance north of the center, not far from the great Abhayagiri Dagoba. While its precise date is unknown, if it is really as old as the rest of the ruins, then it is one of the architectural wonders of the world. It is a double pool, one half of which measures roughly 50 by 20 yards; the other half, 40 by 20 yards. Wide steps stretching the whole length of the tanks descend to the water, and at the ends of each tank there are finely carved staircases for entrance into the pool. What is more pleasing, however, are the proportions of the double tank and the quality of the stone masonry. The workmanship is so fine, in fact, that one might mistake the pool for a modern construction except that nobody knows how to build so well today.

Anuradhapura, then, is both impressive and disarming—impressive because of the great antiquity and stark beauty of most of the ruins and because it must once have been one of the great cities of the world, and charming because of its agreeable situation in a pleasant green park by a cool lake. But what more? It is perhaps foolish to try to make every sight one sees somehow *significant*, to try to give it a meaning beyond the one it obviously has as a city that once was and is no more, but inevitably one wants to know the secret of its fascination.

A perhaps fruitful line of investigation is to compare it with Polonnaruwa, the next capital of Ceylon, where the Sinhalese kings moved after Tamil invasions from India forced them to give up the old capital.

That decadence or impotence brought about the fall of Anuradhapura seems unlikely if one is to judge from the new capital, which in some ways was more extensive and grand than the old one. None of the dagobas is as big as those in Anuradhapura, but Polonnaruwa, which lies about 60 miles to the southeast of the old capital, contains many magnificent monuments. Since it was the capital of Ceylon from the eighth to the thirteenth century (until the capital was moved to Kandy), there are many more remains than at the older Anuradhapura. One of the things one misses at Anuradhapura is sculpture; except for the moonstones and the stylized staircases there is none. But great glory of Polonnaruwa is its sculpture: the huge 40-foot-long reclining Buddha at the Gal Vihara, the headless figure at the nearby Buddha-sima-prasada, the rock-cut figure of King Parakrama Bahu I,

and many others. Presumably Anuradhapura also once had some sculpture. If it did not exist on quite the same scale, it was probably as finely executed, to judge from what evidence there is. The sculpture at Polonnaruwa will certainly interest the visitor, but the many other buildings seem somehow flat in comparison to Anuradhapura.

Ezra Pound used to say that the only way to judge the merit of a poem was to place it beside another one for comparison. The same technique will serve for Polonnaruwa and Anuradhapura.

To begin with, in order not to be influenced by nonessentials, one may remark that the countryside is much the same at both places. Anuradhapura may be more lush than Polonnaruwa, but each has its lake, and there are even more wild animals at Polonnaruwa than at Anuradhapura.

But let us now turn to the ruins. Across the road from the Polonnaruwa rest house is a short embankment which leads to the area of the citadel. In the center of this space, which is covered with the brick foundations of vanished buildings, there rises a large and, because it is a ruin, misshapen building which was the seven-storied royal palace of the twelfth-century king, Parakrama Bahu, the greatest of the Polonnaruwa kings. Virtually all that remains of this building is its bulk. One passes through corridors without ceilings and through half-smashed archways of brick and mortar, and the experience is dull and meaningless. Nothing could be more uninteresting.

At a little distance, across a bit of lawn, there is a pavilion consisting of a high platform which is reached by a carved staircase and which is surmounted by a double row of monolithic columns. Since it is made of stone, the building has preserved its shape much better than has the palace and is therefore more pleasing to the eye. Along the base of the platform there is a frieze in bas-relief showing elephants in a procession.

Admittedly this building is more interesting than the palace because of its artistic quality. But its real interest lies in its relation to Anuradhapura. As one looks down the steps from the platform one finds the same moonstone that is found at Anuradhapura. And at either side of the staircase are the same bannisters that are found in the older capital. Suddenly this relatively successful building becomes interesting *only* because it shows what the pavilions of Anuradhapura must have looked like. And the reason why one is interested in Anuradhapura and not in this really much more complete work is that Anuradhapura is original. Better by far the original, even if it is lying in pieces on the ground.

As soon as one realizes that Polonnaruwa is playing Rome to Anuradhapura's

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Greece, one begins to understand details. It is clear, for example, why only these few dagobas of Polonnaruwa that contain some new element in design are interesting. Happily there were a few experimental designs, one of which added a story to the dagoba, making it resemble a felt hat. This new design is not unsuccessful, but unfortunately there were no further developments in the design of dagobas at Polonnaruwa.

The Wata Dage, a circular building built on a circular platform and enclosing four statues of the Buddha at the head of four sets of staircases, is, however, wholly original in design. Much of the brickwork in the building has been worn away, but enough remains to provide an idea of its plan. While it must have looked something like a railway roundhouse, it was none the less an original addition to the group of buildings—mostly copies of Anuradhapura temples with a few of Hindu design—in which it stands.

On the whole, however, the ruins at Polonnaruwa are unoriginal, and for that reason they lack vitality. To be sure, the temples are in a better state of preservation than those in the older city: the brick walls still stand between the upright stone columns, and there are even traces of fresco paintings to be found. But the principal use of Polonnaruwa seems to be to show what Anuradhapura must originally have looked like.

While it is true that both ruins provide aesthetic and imaginative pleasure, one is really interested in Anuradhapura because it is original. The world is so full of imitations that one is always pleased to come upon a new way of doing things. Anuradhapura is thus especially agreeable for many reasons. Aesthetically it has both a lovely setting and a high standard of artistry in its monuments. But more than the aesthetic, the pleasure of Anuradhapura is the realization that it represents two important human forces—history and religion. It is a unique place; it provides evidence of how people lived over two millennia ago; and it is to this day one of the holy places of the world. One might say that mere uniqueness is no criterion for observation—a three-headed cow is probably unique. But the point about Anuradhapura is that these historical and religious elements are combined in an austere beautiful and original architectural complex, and that Anuradhapura, like Yeats's Byzantium, was one of the few places in the history of the world where religious, practical, and artistic life were one.

SEVEN · MOGHUL ART IN INDIA

A PERSON with a Christian or Western upbringing will almost inevitably consider the mosques and fortresses of Islam in a romantic light. He will remember schoolboy tales of the Crusades which refer to the savage brutality of "infidels," and he will recall the exotic Oriental atmosphere of the *Thousand Nights and a Night*. Thus when he actually looks at the immense fortresses, mosques, and tombs that were built by the followers of the Prophet all over the Middle East and India, his observations will probably be colored by a number of preconceived notions about the Moslems that derive from his youthful memories. This process is abetted by the very nature of Moslem art itself, for more than any other single art it seems to lend itself to romance. It takes little imagination to picture dark mustachioed warriors in exotic armor patrolling the high parapets of the stone fortresses built by the Moghul conquerors of India; and one can easily picture the emperor Shah Jehan directing the construction of the Taj Mahal as a memorial to his favorite wife. Thus there are a number of things that tend to get between the viewer and Moghul art.

The tourist who makes a quick visit to the Taj Mahal and to Fatehpur Sikri will probably say that what he has seen is magnificent and wonderful, but if he is asked exactly why he admires these monuments, he will probably not be able to explain. He is satisfied with a purely emotional response and in being so satisfied falls precisely into the trap laid for him by the Moghul artists, who represented what must have been one of the most romantic peoples who ever lived.

The contribution of the Moghuls to the world's art deserves, however, a dis-

passionate consideration, for it is an art that has had an influence on architecture all over the world. It has some strong points and also some great weaknesses.

Moghul architecture is as noted for its palaces and tombs as it is for its mosques, since by the time most of them were being built, secular architecture had finally developed into something worth serious consideration. The first inspiration for Moslem art, however, was religious, and the mosque set the pattern for secular buildings. Since it contains virtually every feature found elsewhere in Moslem art, it is a convenient place at which to start. It is important, however, to realize the function of the mosque and the rules that governed its construction and decoration.

But first let us recall the religious buildings of the Hindus. To an even greater extent than the Christian church, the Hindu temple is a house of God. Each temple is designed only incidentally as a place of worship; its real function is to provide a place where the god may come and take rest and nourishment. At certain times during the day, for example, Hindu temples are closed so that the god may not be disturbed in his rest. At other times, food is brought with great ceremony and music to the inner sanctum so that the god may not go hungry. Since the Hindu temple is therefore literally designed as a god's house, no effort is spared in its decoration. Lavishness and elegance are appropriate to such places, and therefore Hindu artists felt free to decorate their temples with all the ingenuity they could devise. So great was their enthusiasm that the very act of carving pillars and decorating walls became a form of worship. Thus Hindu temples are covered with extremely individualistic works of art, and the house of a god is as magnificent as a king's palace.

The mosque of the Moslems has quite a different purpose, however. In a sense, it can also be defined as a house of God in so far as it is a religious place; but it is only a spiritual home, a symbol rather than an imagined reality. The principal function of the mosque is to provide a place for meditation and prayer. At specified times during the day the muezzin calls the faithful—not to feed or give comfort to the god as in a Hindu temple, but to pray. The mosque was therefore specifically designed as a house of prayer. Since this was its purpose, artists were prohibited from portraying any natural images, whether of people or of animals, in their decorations. This rule was established partly to avoid idolatry lest the natural images be worshipped, and partly to prevent the worshipper from being distracted from his main business of prayer.

The mosque, then, is plain and simple. What wall decoration there is is generally geometric, although floral designs are also permitted, and the architecture takes its inspiration not from nature but from mathematics. The Hindu temple is supposed to be an imitation of Mount Meru, the home of the Hindu gods, but the triple-

domed and colonnaded mosque seems to come entirely from the workings of the mind.

The design of the mosque is virtually always the same. A large square courtyard is surrounded by a cloister. In the center of the cloister there is a tank for the washing of feet, and at one end rises the mosque itself, a long rectangular building with archways opening onto the courtyard, an interior devoid of furniture, and three domes constituting a roof. Only the number of minarets seems to vary; smaller mosques may have but one, but the great ones will have at least four.

Austerity of design is emphasized by a limitation in permissible shapes. The square or rectangle is the basic shape, augmented by the circle of the domes, and the pointed archways of the cloister and of the mosque itself, which are patterned on the shape of the dome when it is looked at in profile. Whether it is the character of the Moslems or their religion that causes this rigidity of form will be considered later; here it merely needs to be said that this pattern has been imposed on virtually every mosque in India and with only minor variations has determined the form that secular buildings were also to take. There are hundreds of different shapes and designs permissible in Christian and Hindu temples but only one for the Moslem mosque, and therein lies both the strength and weakness of Moghul art.

Given an absolutely rigid architectural plan, the architect was able to express his personality and make his building different from other buildings only by concentrating his attention on details. Happily for Moghul architecture in India, the architects were blessed with building materials with which they could make pleasing contrasts. The two kinds of stone always used are a deep red sandstone and a white marble. Colored marbles and semiprecious stone are also used, but only sparingly and in detailed work, where they are inlaid in white marble. Generally speaking, since it is the cheaper material, sandstone is used for the courtyard and the rectangular part of the mosque, while marble is used for decoration of this surface and for the three domes of the mosque.

This pattern is found throughout Moslem India* not only in mosques but in tombs and palaces. The various buildings naturally differ in quality, but in general what distinguishes a success from a failure is the degree to which the designer was able to exercise restraint. With such limited possibilities at his disposal, the Moslem architect was obviously tempted to overdecorate, to cover his façades with mosaics of inlaid stone, and to introduce a fussiness contradictory to the spirit of Moslem architecture. Thus, for example, the great mosque at Agra with its zigzag pattern on the dome is arresting only momentarily because the design is only a trick. On

* For the purpose of these remarks, India should be taken to include Pakistan.

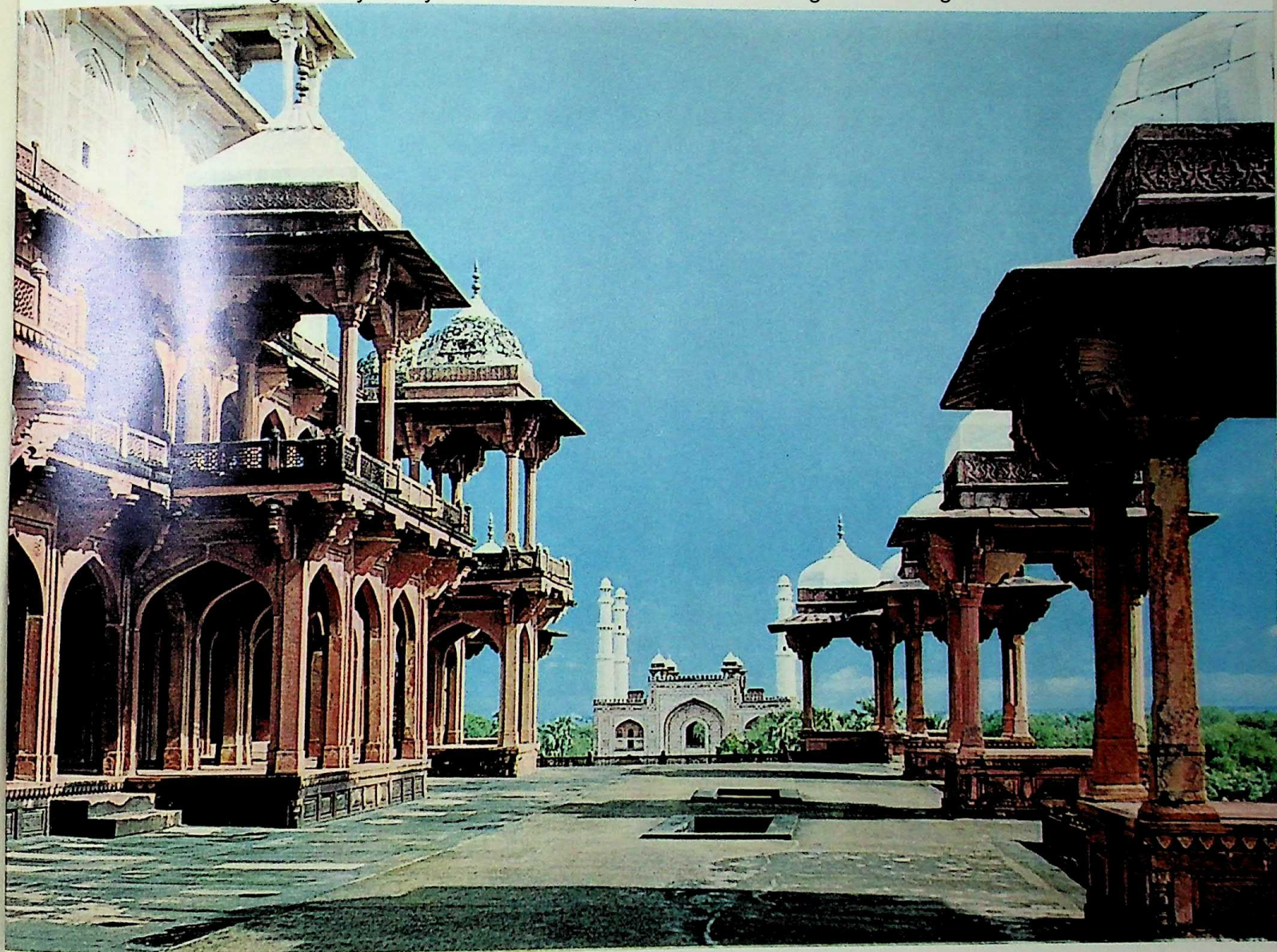


PLATE 63. *Upper terrace, Akbar's Tomb, Sikandra.*

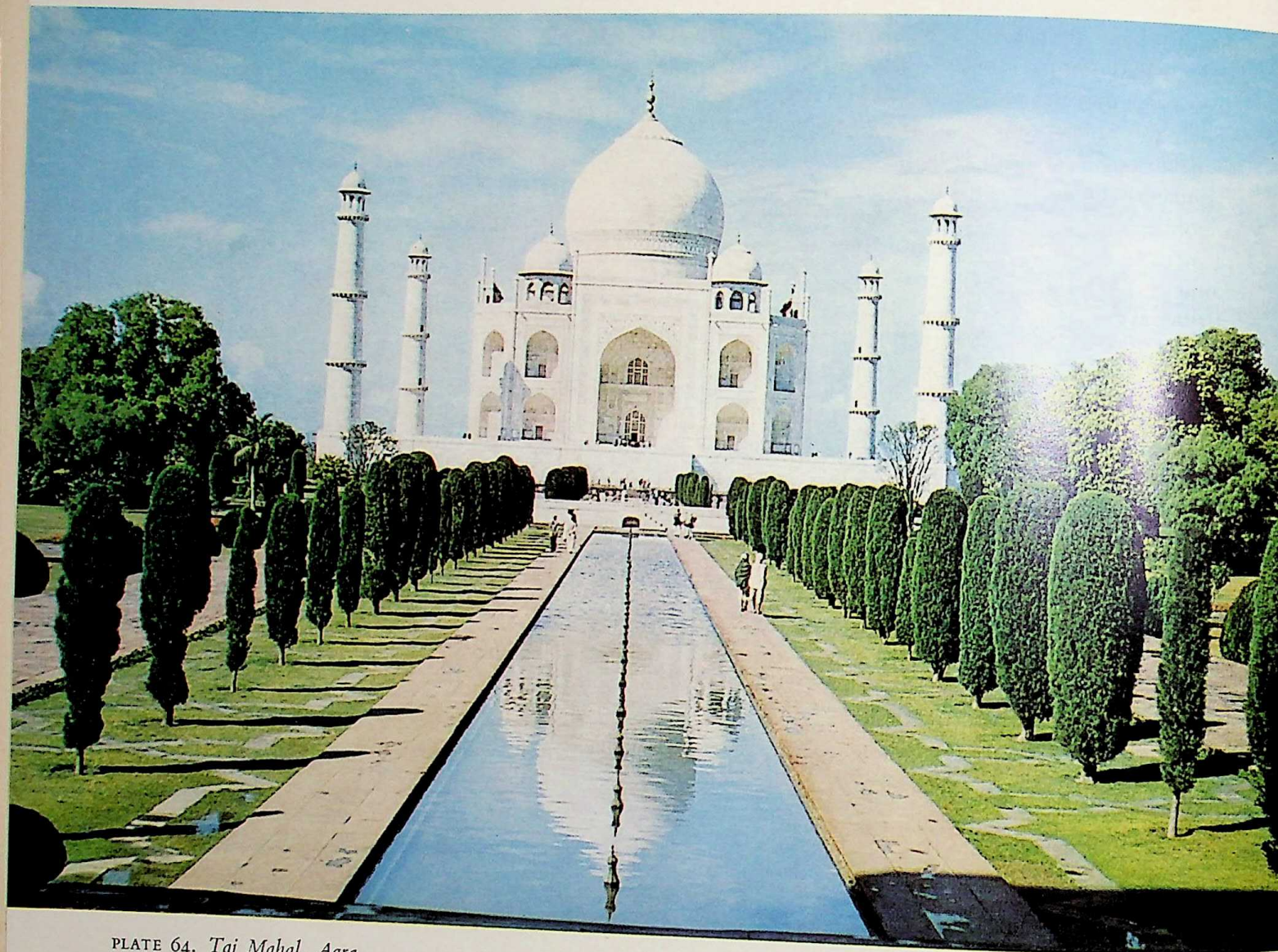


PLATE 64. *Taj Mahal, Agra.*

the other hand, the enormous Badshahi Masjid in Lahore gives satisfaction for hours on end. This mosque is superior to the Moti Masjid in Delhi, for example, because of its more pleasing proportions and because of the delicacy and good taste with which the red sandstone has been decorated with inlaid marble floral designs. Many mosques have tall rectangular gateways covered with marble panels which are inlaid with colored and black stones, but at the Badshahi Masjid, these archways are of red sandstone inlaid merely with floral designs of white marble which complement the three marble domes. This mosque is built on a high platform next to the great Lahore fort, and the classical simplicity of its design can doubtless be attributed to the austere tastes of the Emperor Aurangzeb, who was a kind of Calvin to the Indian Moslems.

Yet beauty in mosques cannot be confined to those that are simple, for within a few hundred yards of the Badshahi Masjid, hidden among the twisting narrow streets of the bazaar, is another mosque that is as beautiful as any other mosque in India. But its charm is quite different. To go to this mosque, the Wazir Khan, from the Badshahi Masjid is like going from the simple upper church of the monastery-cathedral of St. Francis in Assisi to the lower church, which contains the Simone Martini frescoes. The Wazir Khan is located in the heart of the Kashmiri bazaar, and its high platform is reached only by passing through a covered gallery full of merchants in their stalls. The courtyard of the mosque is not large but is perfectly suited to the mosque itself. It is not for its architecture, however, that this mosque is notable, but for the frescoes that decorate its interior. The walls and the interiors of the domes are covered with magnificent floral and geometric paintings. The designs are extraordinarily delicate, and the colors are as bright as they originally must have been. The variety and imagination employed in these drawings is prodigious. All of the five interior archways are decorated in a different manner but with colors and designs that are complementary. The workmanship is of such quality as to indicate that 350 years ago a great school of painting must have been flourishing in Lahore. Yet although it is one of the wonders of Moghul art in India, it is comparatively little known, even in Lahore.

But it is not for its mosques that Moghul art in India is particularly noted, even though the religious buildings set the pattern for secular construction. When the Moslem conquerors arrived from Persia and Afghanistan, using the name Moghul only so they might be compared to the followers of Genghis Khan, they brought with them a standard of living that was much higher than that of Hindu India. They brought with them sherbets and fresh fruit like apricots and apples; they introduced cups and saucers; and they decorated their houses with rugs and curtains.

Thus, although their requirements may seem simple to a European, they were as up-to-date in matters of luxurious living as an American seems in comparison to a Nepalese or a Paraguayan. Their spiritual impact upon the older civilization, however, like that of the American, was quite another matter. Hindu India built magnificent houses only for its gods, but the Moghuls introduced fortresses, palaces, gardens, and tombs for mere mortals. It was probably inevitable that this change should occur, for much the same thing happened in Christian Europe with the coming of the Renaissance.

Nevertheless, from the evidence that is available—for example, at the great Tuqluk fortress outside of the modern city of Delhi—it seems clear that the first Moslems were warriors and little else. This fortress, which is but one of many like it, was designed solely for war, and its grim crenelated walls and narrow streets suggest there was little ease or pleasure in life. Gradually, however, the amenities were introduced, and in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century fortresses of the Moghuls at Delhi and Lahore and Agra, one finds palaces of pleasure built within the fortress walls. But even in these sumptuous palaces there is the same rigidity of architectural form that one finds in mosques. Geometry is in command: everything is shaped in the form of a square, a circle, or a pointed arch, and everything is symmetrical. These palaces consist of many buildings. One of these, an open columned hall, was always used for public audiences, the suitors and lesser officers of the durbar settling themselves on rugs laid on the floor while the emperor heard their requests from a small balcony built into the wall above them. The public audience chambers are the largest of all the palace buildings and normally are made only of red sandstone. Since solid walls would trap the heat, most of the palace buildings are open columned pavilions which are separated from one another by courtyards. The rectangle dominates the ground plan, which is open and spacious. The decoration of the buildings varies, but it usually consists either of semiprecious stones inlaid in floral designs on a marble background or a profusion of colored glass trimmed with gold and silver and set in plaster. Aesthetically the marble inlaid work is more pleasing because it is more simple and permanent, and the Mirror Palaces or Shish Mahals appear almost as vulgar as an evening dress covered with sequins.

The most agreeable features of these palaces, however, are their spaciousness and their use of water and shrubbery. Since Moslem palaces are laid out with strict adherence to symmetry, and since most of the buildings are open to the air, they provide many pleasant vistas. Large portions of the palaces can usually be seen from one place, and therefore, although they are not really very large, they seem to be

spacious. The gardens and lawns increase the beauty of the palaces, especially since they add color. Moghul gardens are formal and have served as models for the great gardens of France, like the one at Versailles. Fountains and pools and streams are also common features of Moslem palaces. Long before Frank Lloyd Wright, the Moghul emperors had open streams flowing through their palaces. Of course there is nothing "natural" about these streams, since they are encased in straight marble troughs and flow into pools fashioned in the shape of lotus flowers. In everything nature is subdued by man.

The famous Moghul gardens like the Nishat Bagh at Srinagar and the Shalimar Gardens at Lahore and Srinagar offer excellent studies in Moghul attitudes to nature. The two Kashmiri gardens are built on ground that slopes gently up from the verge of the Dal Lake, and both are divided into as many as a dozen terraces. Through the center of the garden flows a stream which forms a waterfall where it flows down from one terrace to another and a pool where it runs along the level. Stone pavilions have been constructed at intervals along the watercourse, and where they occur the stream is driven into rectangular pools that contain fountains. The gardens themselves are also geometrical, and the flowers are planted in patterns which are said to resemble those of a Persian carpet. Everything, of course, is symmetrical: a row of zinnias on the right side of the garden will be matched by a similar row of the same color on the left. But nature, being "natural," does not permit itself to be stultified and controlled. Some trees, for example, insist on growing taller than others, and certain gardens will contain more flowers than others. Thus there is a certain amount of irregularity and naturalness in these gardens.

The Moghul delight in spaciousness is also amply illustrated in their gardens, for as one progresses upwards from one terrace to another and looks back upon those below, one sees a whole carpet of flowers and lawn and fountains. From here one can also appreciate nature's pleasing asymmetry, for beyond the garden lies the lake, which is not precisely round, and beyond the lake the great fortress of Srinagar on its hump of a hill, and in the distance the whole snow-capped range of the Himalayas. Indeed, the combination of the regularity of the flower beds with the irregularity of the natural scenery increases the beauty of the gardens, and one can assume that the effect was carefully planned. There is no doubt that the great contributions of the Moghuls to the world's architecture are their handling of space and their imaginative use of nature as a foil to their buildings.

The gardens, then, are more successful than the palaces, for the palaces are too confined and deadened by absolute symmetry. Most of the charm of the palaces consists of the views which are suddenly and unexpectedly come upon and which

provide dramatic glimpses of gardens or courtyards. Normally these little balcony vistas reveal only a part of a courtyard or garden from an irregular angle, but this lack of symmetry gives life to the scene. In addition the palaces often have open galleries that overlook the countryside round about, and since they are usually built on high ground, these galleries provide panoramic views. Probably the most dramatic sight of this sort is that of the Sierra Nevada seen from the Alhambra in Granada. The archways serve as frames for a whole world beyond, just as the Shalimar Gardens provide a symmetrical foreground for the irregular background of the Himalayas.

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Despite these agreeable features, there is a regrettable similarity between the various Moghul palaces in India, since, like the mosques, they only differ in detail. By nature Moslem art is static, but that it was capable of development is illustrated by the achievement of one of the greatest of the Moghul rulers in India, the Emperor Akbar. Determined to introduce some changes, Akbar accomplished what was probably the greatest revolution in Moghul architecture by building as his capital the magnificent city of Fatehpur Sikri. The site of this large city, which was surrounded by high fortifications and built between 1570 and 1620, was chosen because of the presence in the region of a great prophet and saint, but in the end it had to be deserted because of lack of water. Aldous Huxley, who was disappointed by the Taj Mahal, which was built by the emperor Shah Jehan, was much impressed by Fatehpur Sikri, and the reason for his preference is not difficult to explain. The works of Shah Jehan are full of a delicacy and a shimmering beauty that suggest decadence, but Fatehpur Sikri reflects the virility and vitality of the Moghuls at their greatest period.

The success of Fatehpur Sikri is purely architectural, for with the exception of the Jami Masjid, which contains a marble tomb of the saint, all the buildings of the city are constructed of unadorned red sandstone. Because of this limitation in material, the architects were unable to rely on exterior decoration to give variety to their work. Instead they were forced to arrange a ground plan and to design buildings which by themselves and in their barest forms would be interesting. To accomplish this end, they had first to overcome the deadening effect that perfect symmetry usually induces. They did not, of course, build in a wholly asymmetrical manner, since for asymmetry to be effective it must be placed against a background of symmetry. Rather they contrived at Fatehpur Sikri a city in which the over-all ground plan and the positioning of buildings in smaller complexes are closely related. The principal buildings of the palace section are arranged around connecting courtyards, and although a certain symmetry thereby results, the courtyards are

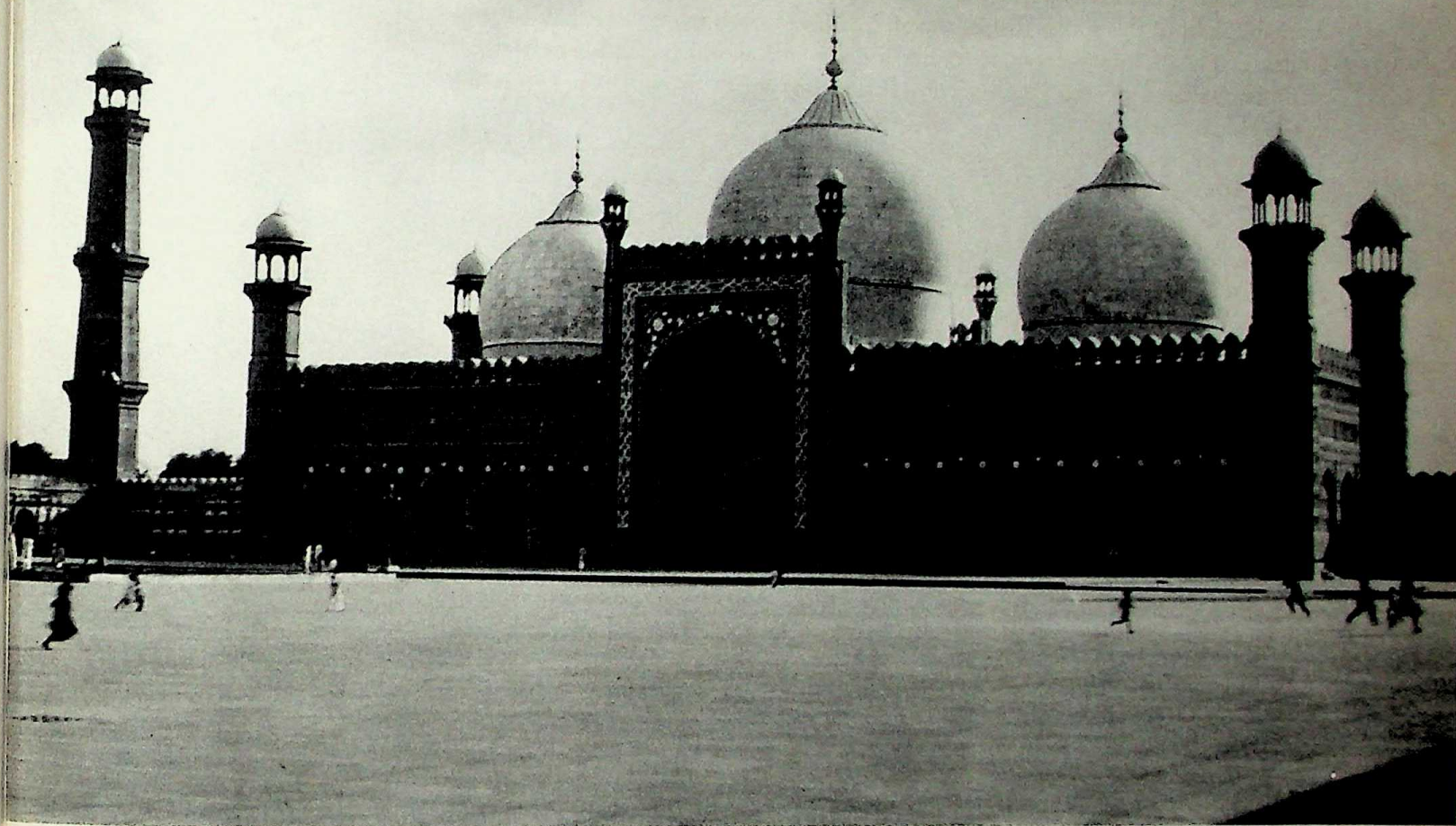


PLATE 65. *Badshahi Masjid, Lahore.*

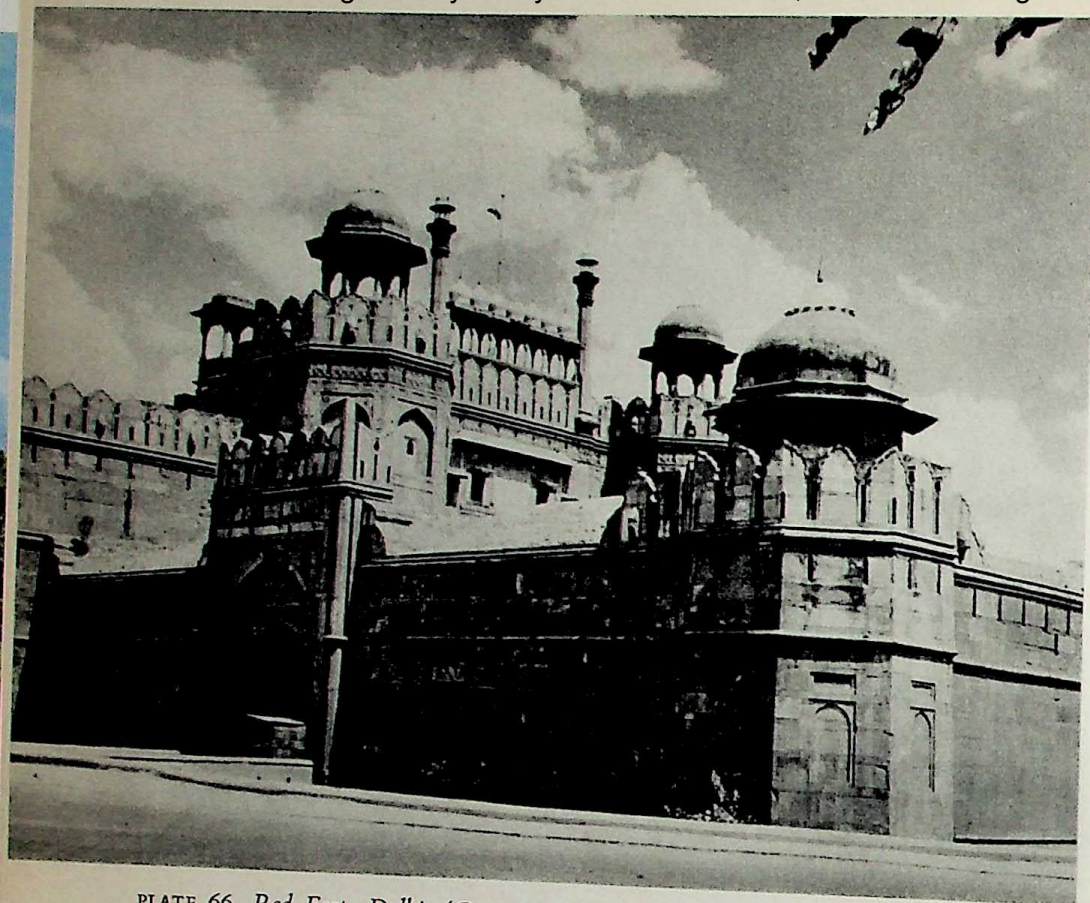


PLATE 66. Red Fort, Delhi. (Courtesy of the Government of India Tourist Office, San Francisco)

PLATE 67. Diwan-i-Khan (Durbar Hall),
Agra Fort. (Palmer Picture)



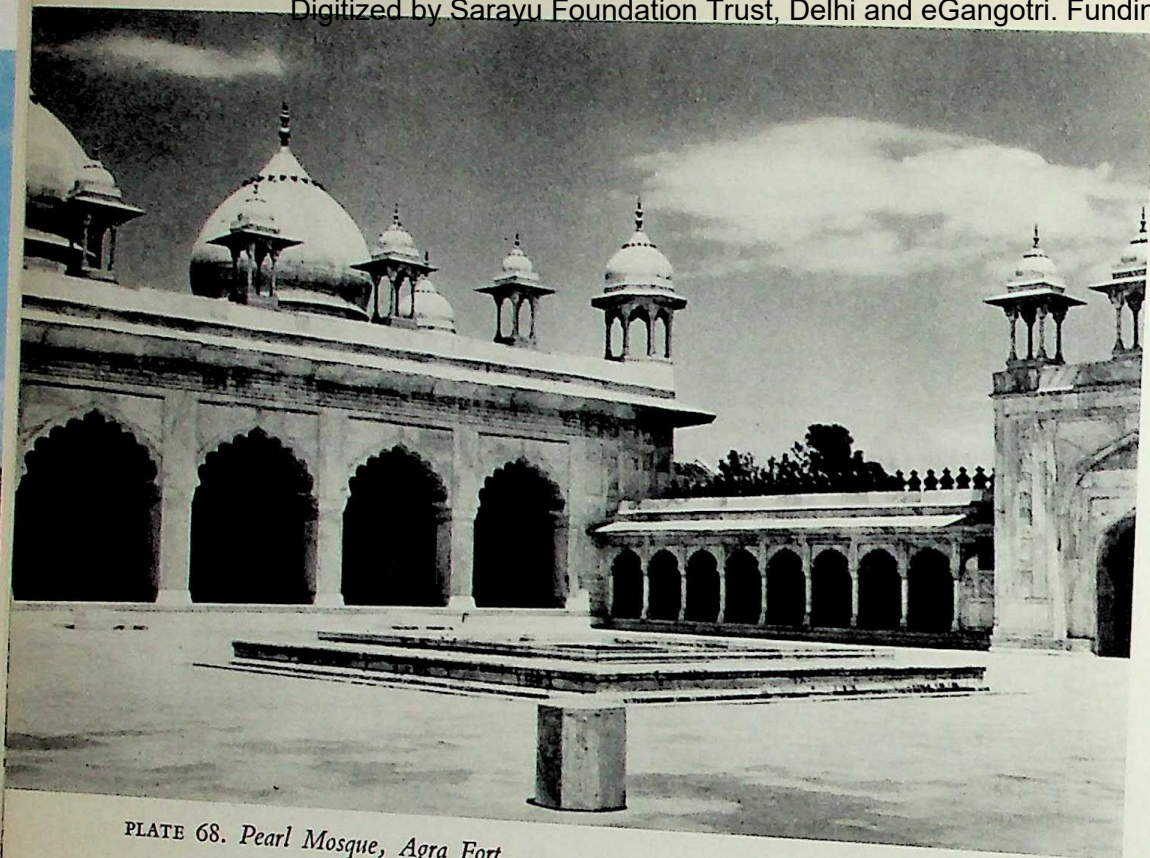


PLATE 68. *Pearl Mosque, Agra Fort.*

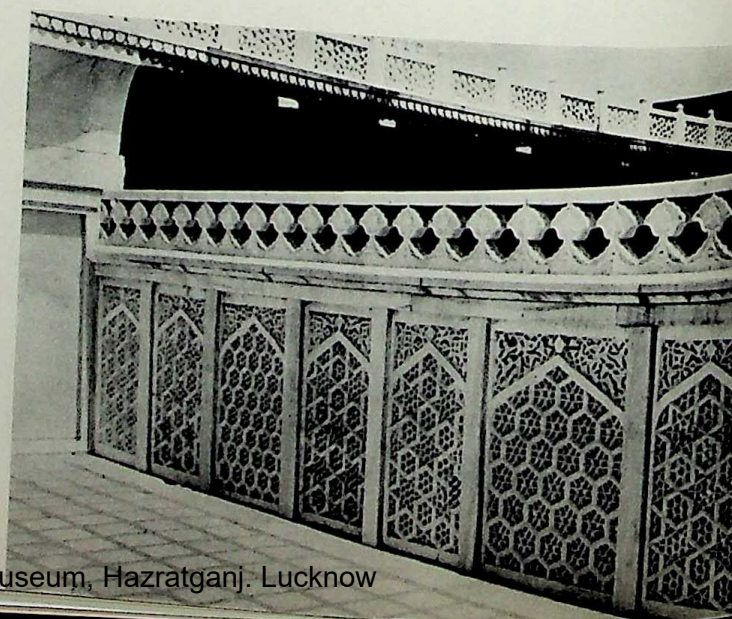


PLATE 69. *Marble grillwork, Agra Fort.*

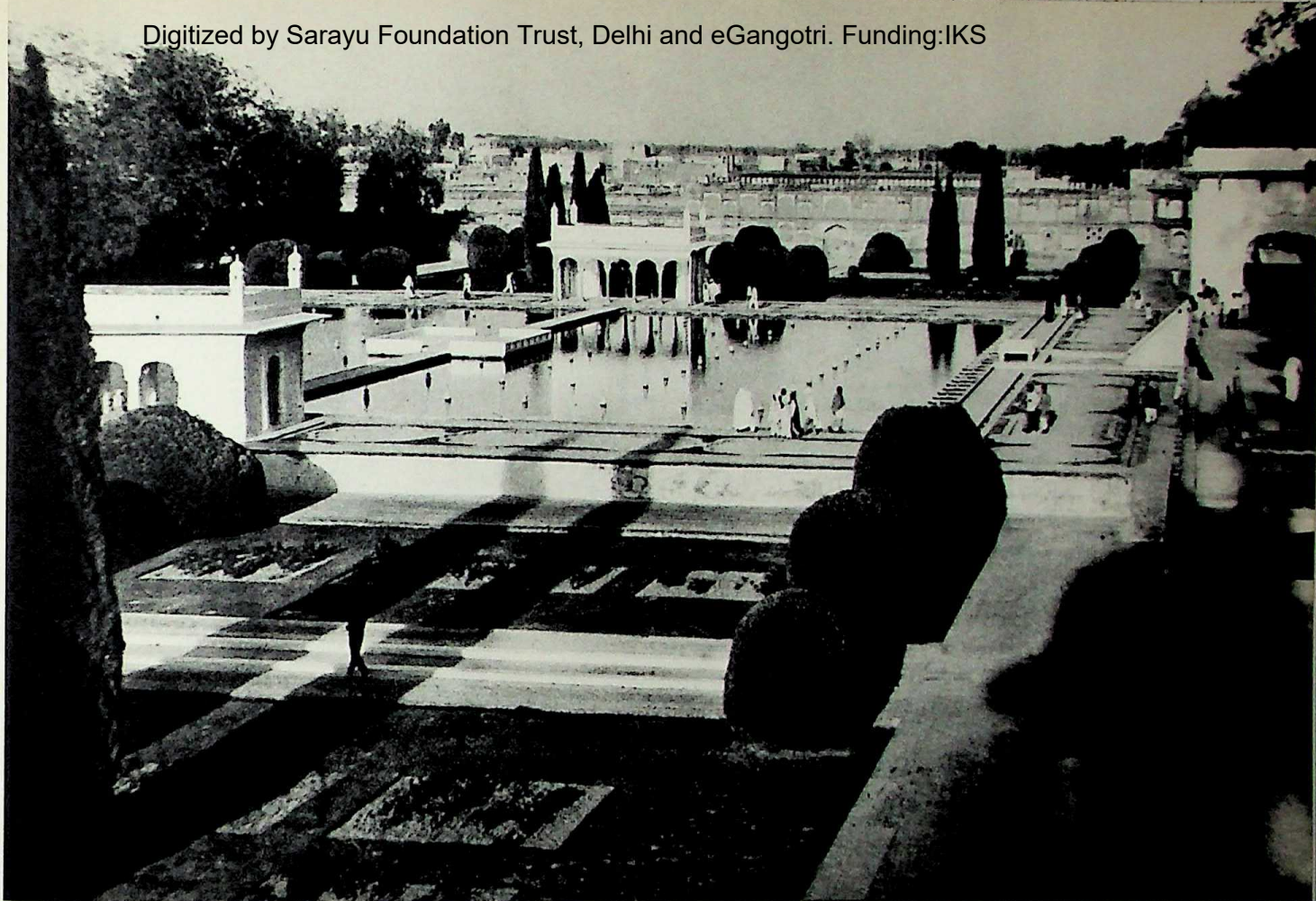
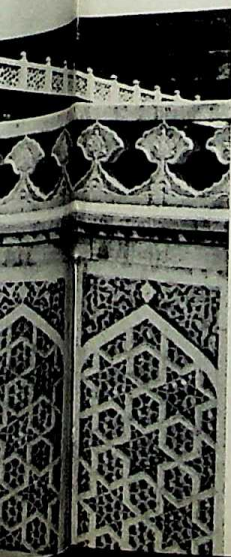


PLATE 70. *Shalimar Gardens, Lahore. (Courtesy of the Consulate of Pakistan, San Francisco)*



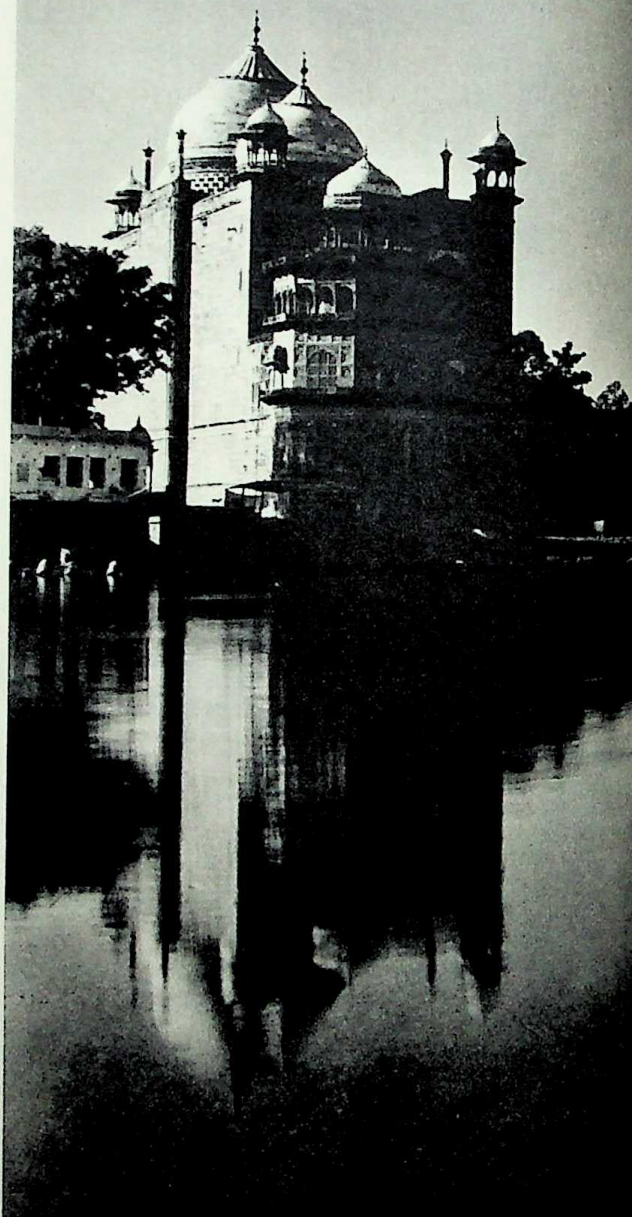


PLATE 71. *Taj Mahal, Agra.* (Courtesy of L. R. Connor, Esq.)

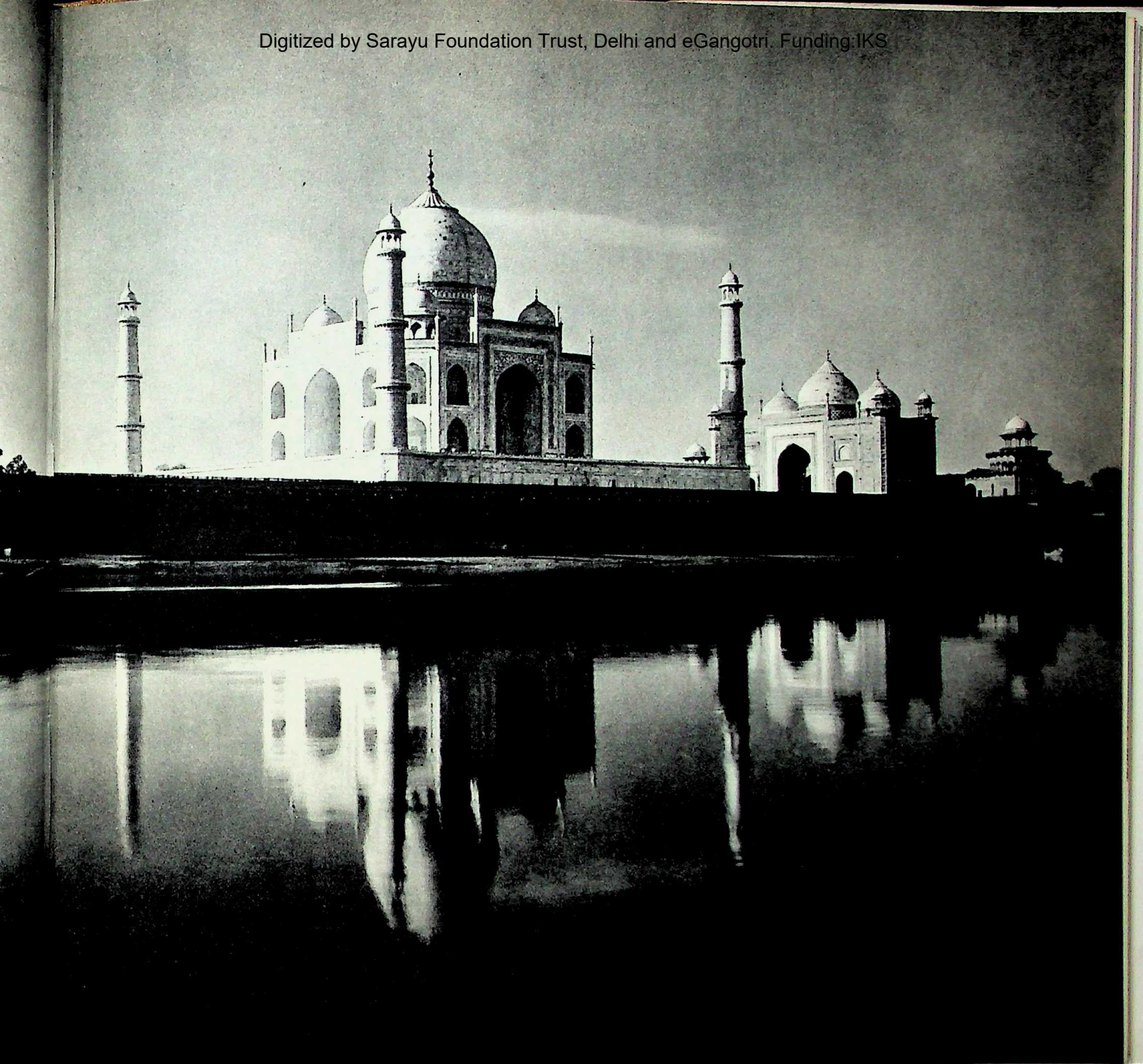




PLATE 72. *Panch Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri. (Courtesy of the Consulate General of India, San Francisco)*



PLATE 73. *Gate to mosque, Fatehpur Sikri.*

staggered, so that when seen from the air the ground plan takes the form of a parallelogram rather than a rectangle. In this way a degree of symmetry is maintained but surprise is also introduced.

Within the courtyards themselves there is a similar mixture of regularity and irregularity. At one end of the principal quadrangle, for example, there are two unmatched structures, and opposite them, behind a small tank, are placed the irregularly shaped living apartments. Near the center of the courtyard are two other unmatched buildings, one a former school, the other a small pavilion. Along one of the long sides of the quadrangle runs a columned passageway, while opposite it rises the Panch Mahal, a building of five stories of open galleries supported by columns, each story being set back from the one below it so that the building resembles an open or wickerwork pyramid. Thus, although the group as a whole is given unity by the rectangular courtyard, it gains variety and individuality through its parts.

The buildings themselves also have this double characteristic. While still remaining loyal to the basic forms of Moghul art, Akbar also used an open cupola with a saucer-shaped roof supported by four or more columns. The openness of this architectural form tends to relieve the heaviness that comes with the use of dark-red sandstone. The Panch Mahal is largely decorated with these cupolas, which also appear on other buildings and thus serve as a kind of leit-motif to the palace as a whole. Other buildings which show great individuality include the Diwan-i-Khan or private audience hall, which contains an enormous pillar rising in the center to support a spacious capital upon which the emperor used to sit. The capital is connected to the four corners of the building by elevated stone bridges covered with intricate carvings. At a little distance from the Diwan-i-Khan there is another building containing dozens of columns, each of which is differently decorated with carvings. For a Moghul building this is certainly an unusual feature, and it is probable that the work was executed by Hindu as well as by Moslem artists.

The Jami Masjid or mosque at Fatehpur Sikri also contains a number of extraordinary buildings and with its great gate possesses a structure the like of which is not found in all of India. This gate is reached by a long flight of stairs, and its exterior façade is taller than its interior. The top of the gate is constructed in three steplike levels which are surmounted by rows of cupolas, and the whole structure is finely decorated with mosaics. It is easily the largest gateway in India. The courtyard of the mosque is austere, and the buildings it contains are not symmetrically arranged. The mosque itself is of no great interest, although it is said to be modeled

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on the one at Mecca, but the tomb of the saint opposite the great gate has some of the finest marble screening to be found in a Moghul building. The designs of the panels are all different and are as delicate and complex as fine lace.

Thus in detail and in general plan—indeed in every aspect of its execution—Fatehpur Sikri demonstrates the skill of Akbar's architects. Similar in style to it is the emperor's tomb at Sikandra, a few miles outside of Agra. A building of five stories with an immense eleven-arched base, its upper stories are constructed in open colonnades of red sandstone which support marble-domed cupolas. Although it is symmetrical in design, it also has variety, for some domes are round, others are octagonal, and still others are four-sided. In this way stagnancy is avoided. Akbar's son Jehangir added a top story of white marble, a touch that Akbar would not have approved of, yet it is not unsuccessful.

In truth, however, when all of Moghul art in India is considered, the great works of Akbar seem to be little more than a vast experiment, for his successors did not follow his lead and invent new designs but were content to elaborate the more traditional elements of Moslem art, confining themselves to the onion-shaped dome, the pointed arch, and the rectangle. They maintained the Moslem trait of spaciousness and elegance, but they were never really original.

Shah Jehan was the most ambitious builder of the later Moghul emperors, for he added many buildings to the palaces at Agra, Delhi, and Lahore and is renowned for building the Taj Mahal as a memorial to his favorite wife. This famous tomb, considered by many to be one of the most beautiful buildings ever constructed by man, is Shah Jehan's greatest feat, and it is also the last sizable building built by the Moghuls in India.

It is difficult to write of the Taj Mahal because it is at once so familiar and so little known. To consider some of its technical aspects may baffle those who have not seen it, while those who have, and are partial to it, admire it with an almost blind faith and are resentful of analysis. Nevertheless, there is much that can be said of it. That it has a certain magic cannot be denied, that it invites the visitor to return again at dawn or at sunset, and that these visits reveal new things suggest that it is no ordinary building. Seen when the monsoon breaks over Agra, it almost disappears in the thick rain. At dawn on a clear day, the early morning light of the sun imparts warmth and color to the white façade, heightening the relief and giving the marble the deep tone of ivory. In the light of the moon it is again different, for the stones inlaid in the marble glisten and reflect the light like diamonds. But whatever the magic of the Taj Mahal, it is all a contrived magic. Nothing was left to chance, and it is hence a perfect example of the late period of Moghul art.

Two features of Moslem art that have already been noted as contributions to the architecture of the world are the use of nature and the love of vistas. With regard to the Taj, the first is almost too obvious to mention, for as everybody knows, there are long rectangular ponds between the main gate and the Taj in which the monument is reflected. The sumptuous and orderly gardens also provide a rich green foreground for the glistening white dream palace beyond. The effectiveness of the Taj Mahal very much depends on these features. When one first enters the main gate, which is a tower containing a large chamber, only a part of the Taj is visible through the further arch. All that one sees is the white façade of the tomb, which looks like an elaborate marble grille. Then as one approaches, the rest of the building reveals itself. This dramatic entrance is cleverly contrived, but it is as nothing compared to what is to come. When one stands on the steps, with all of the monument in view, one has a definite feeling that the Taj is not anchored to the ground: it seems to float at an indeterminate distance. This, of course, is part of its "miraculous" quality and why it has been called ethereal. Actually, it is a contrived optical illusion, for halfway between the gate and the base of the monument a raised marble tank has been constructed which interrupts the line of vision between the observer's eye and the base of the tomb and, by foreshortening the space between the tomb and the base, obscures the actual distance. Thus the Taj seems to have no fixed position and appears to float in space. This illusion is increased by another feature, for since the Taj is built on a high bank at the edge of the river, it has no background but the sky, which is always less reliable than trees or hills for the determining of distance.

Once conscious of some of the tricks employed for effect, one becomes especially alert to discover others, and this process tends perhaps to make one overly critical. At any rate, one of the first faults to be revealed in the design of the building is the awkward dimensions of the building itself. It is seriously out of proportion, being too tall and bulky for its breadth. To correct this fault, four minarets were constructed at a distance from the four corners of the building, and these give the illusion of widening the base and restore pleasing proportions to the whole complex. Whether the minarets were part of the original plan or whether they were an afterthought is not important, since in any event they are not an entirely satisfactory solution, for when seen from angles other than that of the frontal ninety-degree angle, the Taj sometimes appears unwieldy and awkward as the minarets disappear from sight at the back or overwhelm the nearer view.

The Taj has other faults as well, if one will permit what may seem to be carping criticism. The vertical lines and turrets, for example, are lifeless simply because in

a building made of brick and mortar they have no functional purpose. The ground plan and interior are also extremely pedestrian, and the grillwork is dull to the point of crudeness. On the other hand, the inlay work is superb, both on the tombs of Shah Jehan and his wife and on the exterior façade. The floral designs and the enormous archways decorated with black Arabic script which vault each entrance have been criticized by some as lessening the pristine quality of the marble. Yet as any painter knows, they are essential in order to give depth to the building. If it were constructed of white marble only, it would appear very flat when seen from a distance. Finally, although the Taj Mahal is hardly an example of an art that conceals its artistry, it must be admitted that it is one of the marvels of the world. It is probably somewhat overrated, but it has one quality of greatness insofar as it continually attracts one. Most of the world's buildings require only one visit to assess them properly, but the Taj requires many. And that surely is a mark of its fascination and artistic quality.

While it is true that the monuments of Moghul art in India are not ruins in the ordinary sense of the word, since they are none of them very old, they still represent, just as Anuradhapura and Pagan do, an age that has passed, and they reflect the people who dominated that age. That these people were markedly different from their Hindu neighbors is immediately obvious, and one can draw certain conclusions about the Moslem conquerors from their buildings, just as one can discover something about Hindu beliefs through looking at Madurai and Ellora.

Originally, as has been noted, the inspiration for Moghul architecture was religious, and it would appear that the restrictions imposed on the building of mosques were also applied to their secular buildings. Thus their architecture in general was controlled by their strong religious beliefs. Unlike the Hindus, who fully expressed their personalities in their buildings, the Moghuls built only according to an ideological pattern that could not be contradicted. Akbar, who was noted for his tolerance, alone made experiments, but his great-grandson Aurangzeb was like a Cromwellian and destroyed what he felt was idolatrous and impure in the buildings of his forebears.

In its rigidity lies both the strength and weakness of Moghul art. At its worst, the architecture and painting is static and uninspired; at its best, where there has been experimentation within a definite form and pattern, it is magnificent. Adherence to a certain amount of control is of course necessary and may be compared to the discipline required of an artist before he begins to create. Thus the art and architecture of the Moghuls seem to reflect their character. That they were practical there can be no doubt, for no architecture in the world is better suited to

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its climate than that of the Moghuls. The huge arches give shade, the open sides admit cooling breezes, and the fountains and streams are refreshing. Yet the rigidity of their plan allows only an austere luxury: a love of splendor rather than of comfort seems to have been the guiding spirit of the emperors, particularly Shah Jehan.

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Yet another mental characteristic of the Moslem rulers of India is reflected in their attitude towards death. Outside of the Egyptians, no people in the world ever built such grandiose tombs. Except for the puritan Aurangzeb, who had a quite different view of the matter and whose tomb near Daulatabad is very modest, all of the emperors and many of the rich and powerful men of the Moslem court built vast and pretentious tombs for themselves. To be sure, the Taj Mahal was constructed as a memorial to somebody else, but Shah Jehan had planned his own tomb to be an equally large though black Taj across the river, and all of the other emperors saw to the building of their own tombs before they died. Personal vanity is not a wholly satisfactory explanation for these monstrous piles, for although it was involved, what is more important is the romantic view of life these tombs represent.

There is no romance in Hindu India; there is mythology, but that is a different thing. A stroll in Banaras or in the streets of Old Delhi is enough to demonstrate the difference. In the Moslem world, however, romance seems to have played a large part, and the art and architecture the Moghuls introduced is essentially unreal. Consider the fairy marble palaces, the dreamland tombs, and the gorgeous gardens which are better than nature itself. Faced with the hard job of conquest and of governing a realistic country where the light is hard and clear, the Moslems in their leisure hours withdrew from the village streets, where there is no shade and where poor men and animals live together, and built themselves palaces that emphasized all the things the rigorous life of India did not provide. Their fantastic tombs, from that of Humayun in Delhi to the Taj Mahal in Agra, reflect the same mentality—the same desire to escape from reality, the same refusal to admit, as the Hindus so freely admit when they cremate their dead, that everyone must face certain facts like birth and death and poverty. In the Moghul mind one senses a feeling of desperation lest their artificial world not provide all that was wanted, and one remembers that the emperors resorted to cruel and superstitious practices in order to gain their ends. The saint at Fatehpur Sikri, for example, who foretold the birth of Akbar's son Jehangir, had to sacrifice the life of his own six-month-old infant in order that Jehangir might live when born.

The Moghul emperors, it seems, had the temerity to want to control all of the

forces of nature. Their formal gardens symbolize this desire, but it is even more dramatically illustrated by their tombs. Nothing was to be left to chance, and even in death they were to have the security of gigantic marble fortresses and access to the most beautiful art that man could devise.

Yet, as in most things, there is a paradox in Moghul art and architecture. Looked at from a ninety-degree angle, a Moslem building appears flat, like the backdrop of a stage, and it only comes to life when seen from an obtuse or acute angle. The Taj Mahal, for example, is most beautiful and alive when it is seen rising from a foreground of lawn and flowers or framed by the branches of a tree. It would almost seem that the intention of Moghul aesthetics was that their buildings should merely serve as backgrounds for human actions, like stage scenery. Christian or Hindu art is itself a reflection of life; it is vital and human, sometimes unsymmetrical, sometimes imperfect, and it mixes almost as an equal with living men. But Moghul architecture is static and rigid; it has no life of its own, becoming real only when seen from an irregular angle or as a background for human action—as, for example, when the faithful gather to pray at their mosques.

This paradox is the central irony of Moghul art, for of course the Moslem conquerors could not build a paradise on earth, especially such an exclusive one. The mentality of the Forest Lawn cemetery in California includes, among other things, self-deception, and in the same way it was probably as inevitable as it would have been irritating to the great emperors that their palaces and tombs should today be filled with picnickers and noisy tourists and that Akbar's rest at Sikandra should be disturbed every few moments by the shout of the guide who likes to demonstrate to curious visitors the duration of the echo in the dome over his grave.

In the end, then, the Westerner is likely to be little satisfied with Moghul art because he is so out of sympathy with Moghul ideas. The Moghuls appear to have been scientific rather than artistic; they had rigid minds that seemed to avoid speculation and individuality, especially in religion. They were serious rather than frivolous, and they liked to have everything planned. Representatives of largely materialistic societies like those of Russia or America, who are also romantic with their own Forest Lawns, may find much in common with the Moghuls. But at the final court that judges the world's art, the work of the Moghuls must be ranked as second-rate, if for no other reason than the corruption of their inspiration. The Hindus and Christians built for the greater glory of God; the Moslem emperors built for the great and perpetual glory of the Moslem emperors. Their mosques are their only buildings that still satisfy; their palaces and tombs are so much tinsel.

This may seem a severe and presumptuous judgment to make of an art that has

for centuries attracted admirers from many parts of the world. Yet that it is a sound judgment may be seen when Moghul art is compared to the other arts of the world. To be sure, the Moslems contributed much to the development of architecture, but ironically they are most useful as a touchstone to explain our admiration for really great works of art, like Ellora and Chartres, Angkor and the cathedral at Pisa.

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MOGHUL
ART

EIGHT · THE BLUE DOMES OF ISFAHAN*

COMING from India, one does not expect to find Moslem architecture in Persia to be on a very high level, for the assumption is that the rigidity of Moghul architecture in India will be even more noticeable in Iran. It is therefore surprising to find in the provincial city of Isfahan monuments of such dazzling beauty that they are hardly equaled in the rest of the world.

For centuries Isfahan had been an important town in central Iran, and like most Persian cities, it had known prosperity and ruin, peace and war. But finally in the sixteenth century, under the Safavid kings, it became the capital of the whole country. For two centuries the city flourished and grew beautiful until at last the dynasty was overthrown by invading Afghans, and the capital was moved to Shiraz. The greatest of the Safavid kings was Shah Abbas, for it was he who built the square or *maidán* in the center of the city, surrounding it with palaces and mosques of extraordinary beauty.

At the same time that Akbar and his son Jehangir were building their plain red sandstone palaces and marble tombs in India, Shah Abbas was constructing ornamental mosques and palaces entirely sheathed with tiles of blue and yellow and turquoise. It is true, of course, according to those who know Iran well, that the people are more Persian than Moslem and that the national characteristic outweighs

* The rather damaging remarks made in the preceding chapter on the quality of Moslem art had to be revised after a visit to the Persian city of Isfahan. The chapter on Moghul art has been allowed to remain unchanged, however, since I still think it is an honest assessment of Moslem art in India. That Moslem art reached great heights in Isfahan will, I hope, be seen in the notes that follow.



PLATE 74. *Dome, Shah Mosque, Isfahan.*

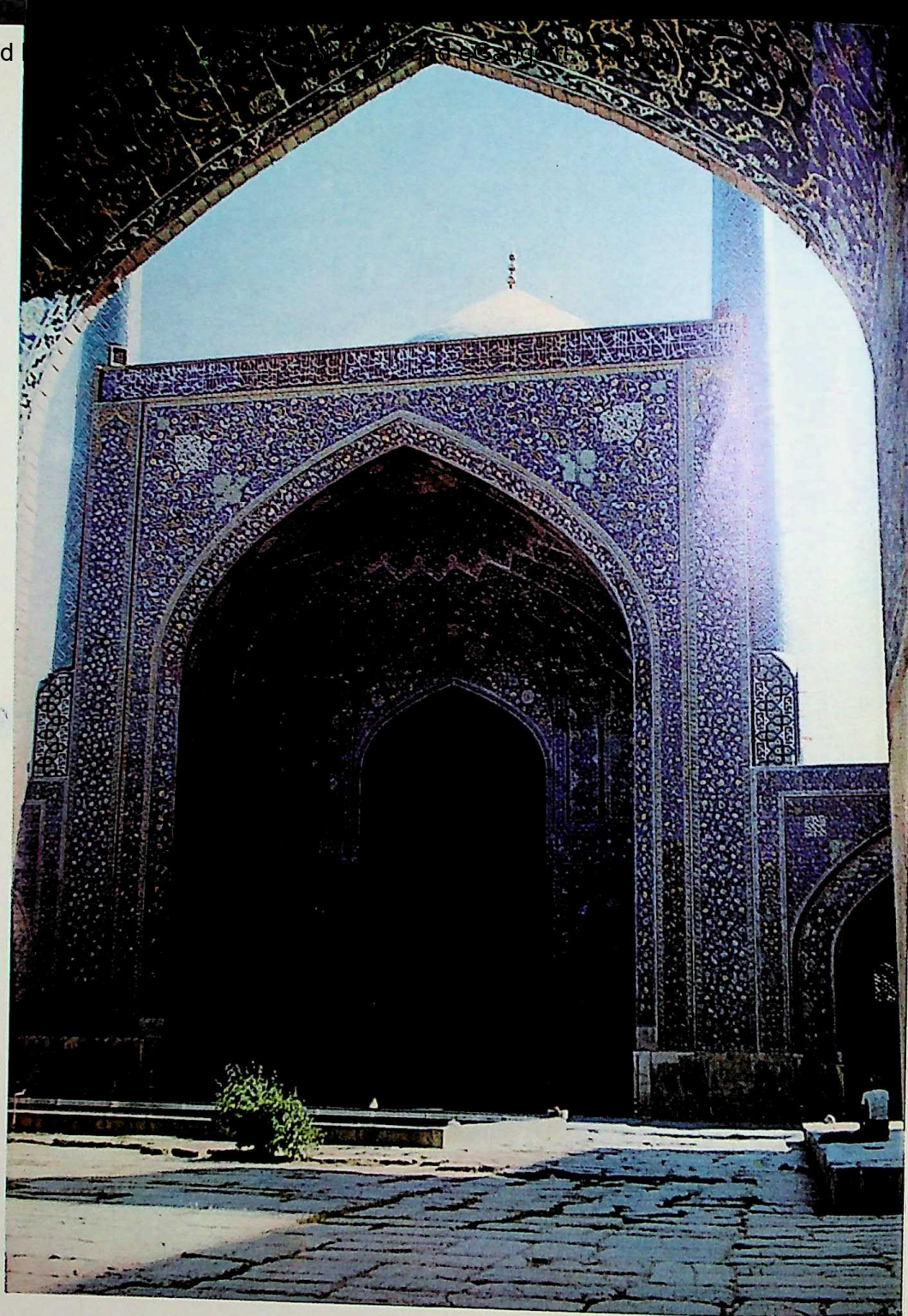


PLATE 75. *Principal arch,
Shah Mosque, Isfahan.*

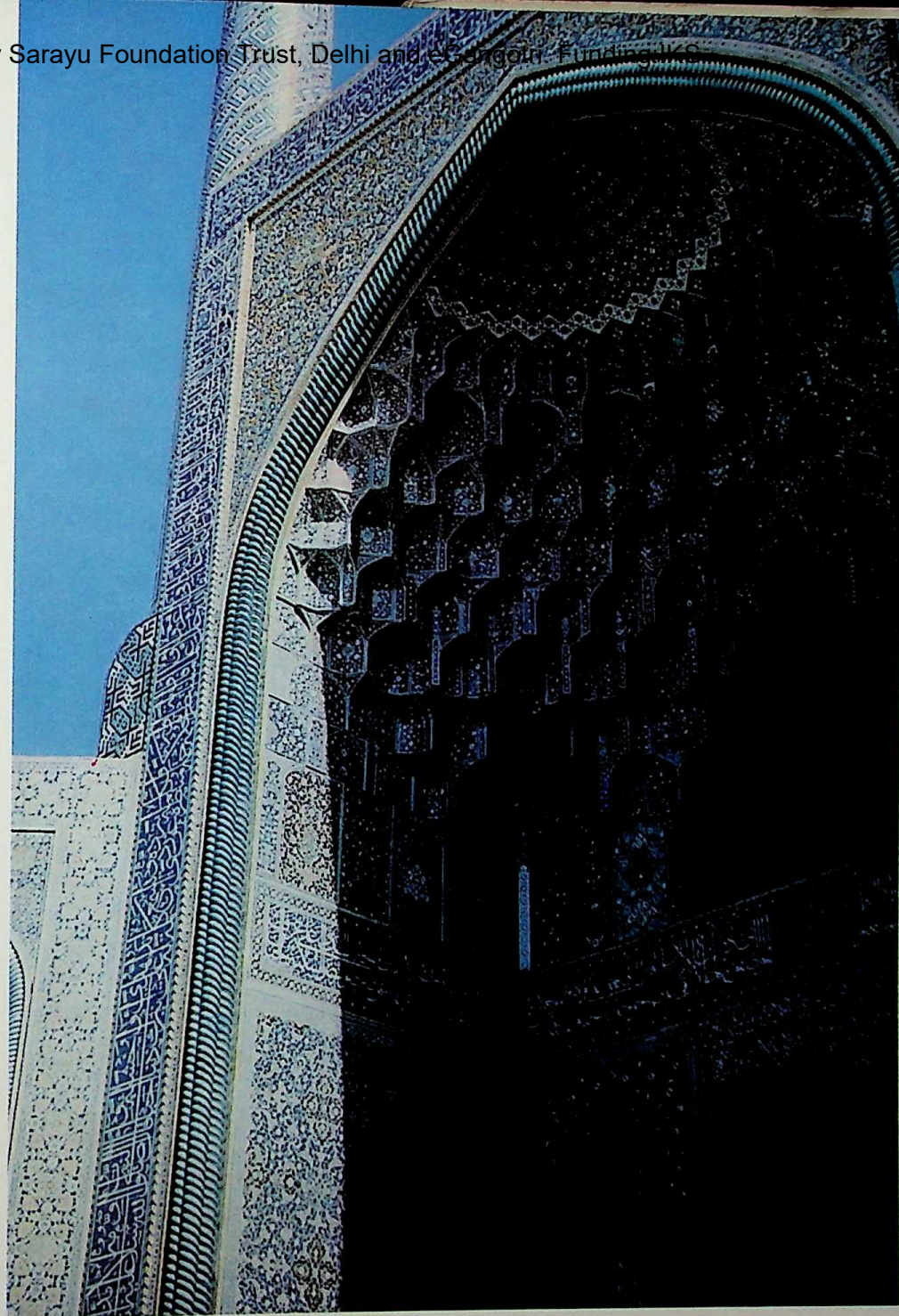


PLATE 76. Minaret and
detail, Shah Mosque,
Isfahan.

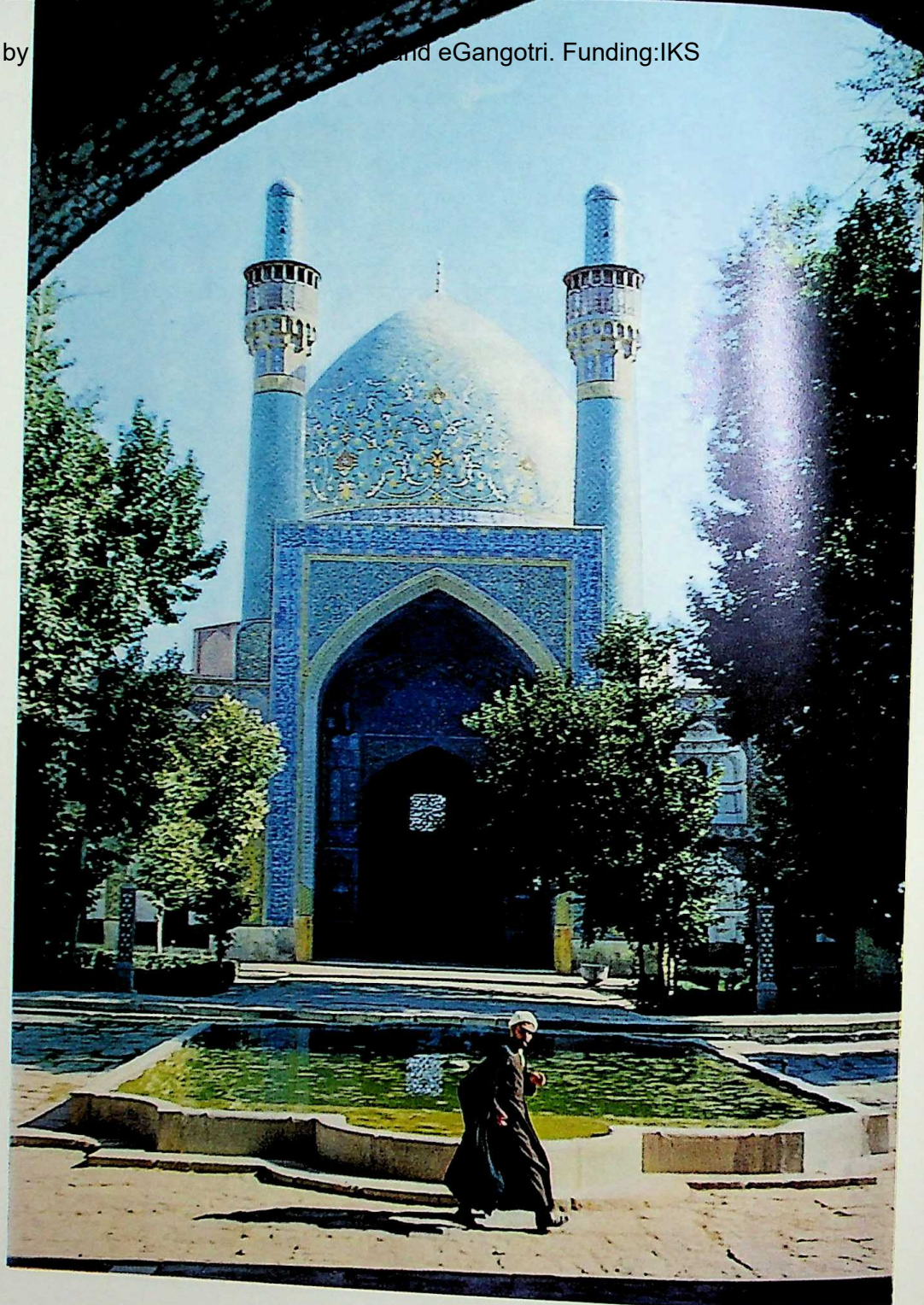


PLATE 77. *Chahar Bagh,*
Isfahan.

the religious despite the fact that there is probably no more fanatic center outside of Mecca than the holy Persian city of Mash'had. On a short visit to Iran it is impossible to determine the nature of Iranianism, but certain things are clear. The Persians love color: their gardens are full of flowers, and the peasant women who have not become Westernized wear robes and dresses of bright reds and blues. The Persians also seem to like order and ease. That is to say, they like to have spacious gardens and parks and palaces which provide an outward orderliness and form so that they can be idle and individualistic in their private lives. They also appear to be an inventive and artistic people. To be sure, the quality of Persian handicrafts has deteriorated sadly, and contemporary makers of tiles and weavers of rugs merely repeat old designs, but with their gracious politeness and their interest in beautiful things, the Persians seem to be a race of poets. It is no wonder that Hafiz and Sa'adi came from Shiraz, for it is a city of cool gardens and turquoise pools surrounded by cruel and barren mountains. In the evening one can sit in a moonlit garden that is heavy with the scent of roses and, while sipping the pungent wine of the district, consider the barren mountains outside.

All of these characteristics seem to have influenced the builders of the mosques and palaces in Isfahan. No puritanism has ever been forced upon the Iranian character to make it afraid of beauty and color, and so when the Persians wanted to create something beautiful they did so in an expansive and rich manner. The oriental carpet with its intricate designs and rich hues is one aspect of their work. The tiles at Isfahan are another.

But first let us consider the architectural forms of Moslem art in Persia. As elsewhere, the mosque is the principal architectural monument, providing a pattern that was later adapted by secular buildings. In India, as has been noted, the mosques tend to be much the same, but even though the pattern of the open courtyard is also used in Iran, it is graced with more variety than it is in India. One of the oldest mosques in Isfahan is the Jami Masjid, which is located on the edge of the great bazaar. Its dome is of plain tan brick, for it has never been tiled, and its courtyard is square, but in all other features the Persian imagination has been allowed to run free. The edifice of the mosque itself is literally a sea of columns, many of them irregularly placed, and under its great arches a roadway suddenly leads to a small back gate, and an unexpected passageway reveals a small high-domed chapel covered with fantastic carvings. Elsewhere a long oblong room full of magnificent arches of carved stone obtrudes into the colonnaded mosque, and in another place two small chambers face each other across a stone grille carved like the finest lace. To be sure, the Jami Masjid was built over many years, and successive generations

have added to it. But nowhere does one find the slavish adherence to symmetry and engineering exactness which is so stultifying in Moslem architecture in India. The Persians did as they wished, and nothing was permitted to force them into a prescribed pattern.

At the Jami Masjid the most daring and original structures are the four high gateways that face the central courtyard. Each one of these is different from the other. They follow a pattern insofar as each has a rectangular top with an oval interior, but there are no other restrictions. The interiors of the arches consist of small panels of a dozen different designs so delicately fashioned that they resemble cut crystal, and the colors of the tiles employed vary markedly from gateway to gateway.

The same imaginativeness used in the design of the Jami Masjid can be seen in the Shah Mosque and the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque in the maidán or central square of the city. At one end of the square, opposite the bazaar, is the huge blue gateway of the Shah Mosque, flanked by the smaller arches that decorate the high walls of the whole square. On opposite sides of the square, and facing each other across a garden and pool, are the brown-domed Lotfollah Mosque and the open-terraced Palace of Ali Qapu, which is seven stories high. These three buildings give the square its form and unity, but individually they are all quite different. The palace faces straight onto the square, but since mosques must face towards Mecca, the actual buildings of the Masjid Shah and the Masjid Lotfollah do not face onto the square but are built at an angle behind the façade of the square. The Lotfollah dome therefore is not in a direct line with its entrance, and the entire Shah Mosque is built at a forty-five degree angle to the right of its gate, with which it is connected by a covered gallery. This irregularity of construction lessens the severity of the rectangular square and introduces variety and movement into something which would otherwise be static.

Opinions vary as to which of the three tiled domes is the most beautiful—that of the Chahar Bagh, the Lotfollah, or the Shah Mosque. All three have different shapes: the two blue domes of the Chahar Bagh and the Shah Mosque are most alike, but that of the Chahar Bagh has a taller base. The Lotfollah is lower, yet more ample than either of the others. None of these Persian domes has the somewhat pinched onion shape found in other Moslem countries. Instead, they somewhat resemble the Sinhalese stupa. From the base, the dome swells out very slightly and then rises in a gentle arch to its peak, where it cuts in to form a spire. Each of these domes is lovely in its own way, and each has a serenity that is equaled nowhere else in the world—not at St. Peter's in Rome nor even at the Taj Mahal.

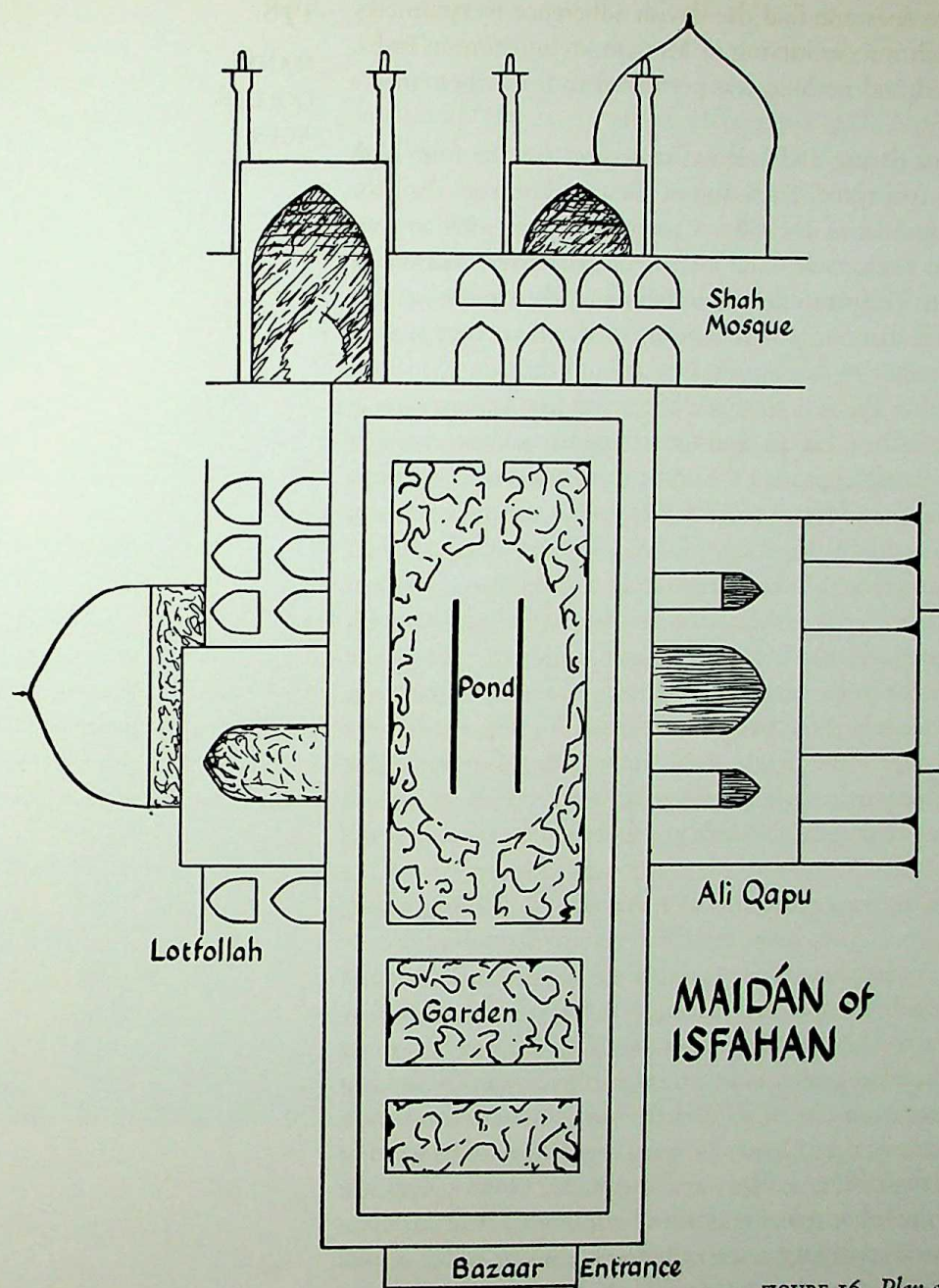


FIGURE 16. Plan of the Maidán at Isfahan.

Further architectural marvels can be observed in the Shah Mosque, although here as elsewhere it is difficult to separate the architectural form from the tiles which adorn it. In this mosque one senses the magnificent complexity that is sometimes found in a great Gothic cathedral. This complexity stems from an architectural technique and derives from the well-known Moslem genius for handling space and perspective. Everything here is built in relation to the central dome and the area underneath it, which is separated from the side chambers by walls and arches. When one catches sight of this high vault from one of the side pavilions, one is instinctively drawn towards it. This attraction is achieved partly by having the walls of the central section so tall that one feels compelled to see where they stop—or, rather join the dome—and partly by having the blue tiles of the central section more brightly illuminated than in the side sections. Light for this illumination is admitted in two ways: high above the side walls there are triangular archways which open onto the roofs of the side chambers, and in the dome itself four double-grilled windows have been cut. In addition, light is admitted from the central entrance. Because of these openings, the magnificent tilework may be seen clearly. All of these lighting methods are far in advance of anything found in Moghul art in India, and only in the Ananda Temple at Pagan is there an equivalent skill demonstrated.

Elsewhere, as in the Chahar Bagh, the use of pools and a garden adds to the beauty of the buildings. Because of its geometric regularity, Moslem architecture is always enhanced by natural irregularities. Even in a formal Persian garden the cypresses are never of precisely the same height, and the flowers refuse to follow mathematics. The Chahar Bagh is particularly attractive because of the pools which reflect the turquoise and yellow of the tiles, the dark green of the cypresses, and the blue of the sky.

The real marvels of Isfahan, however, are the tiles themselves. Although they have been passed over in the above consideration of Safavid architecture, they are in fact inseparable from it. Tiles and mosaics are very old means of decoration and in some countries have been used as much for economy as for beauty, since they obviate the need for paint. Yet nowhere in the world have they been used so successfully as in Isfahan. Here their effectiveness is caused partly by the astonishing profusion with which they have been placed all over domes and arches and walls and partly by the beauty of their design. Generally speaking, three colors seem to be preferred in Persian tiling: dark blue, yellow, and turquoise. Other colors like green, white, and tan are also used, but the effect that a Persian tiled wall has upon one is that of incredible blueness sparkling with yellow. In Europe tiling is used sparingly, usually by way of contrast with painted surfaces, but in the mosques at

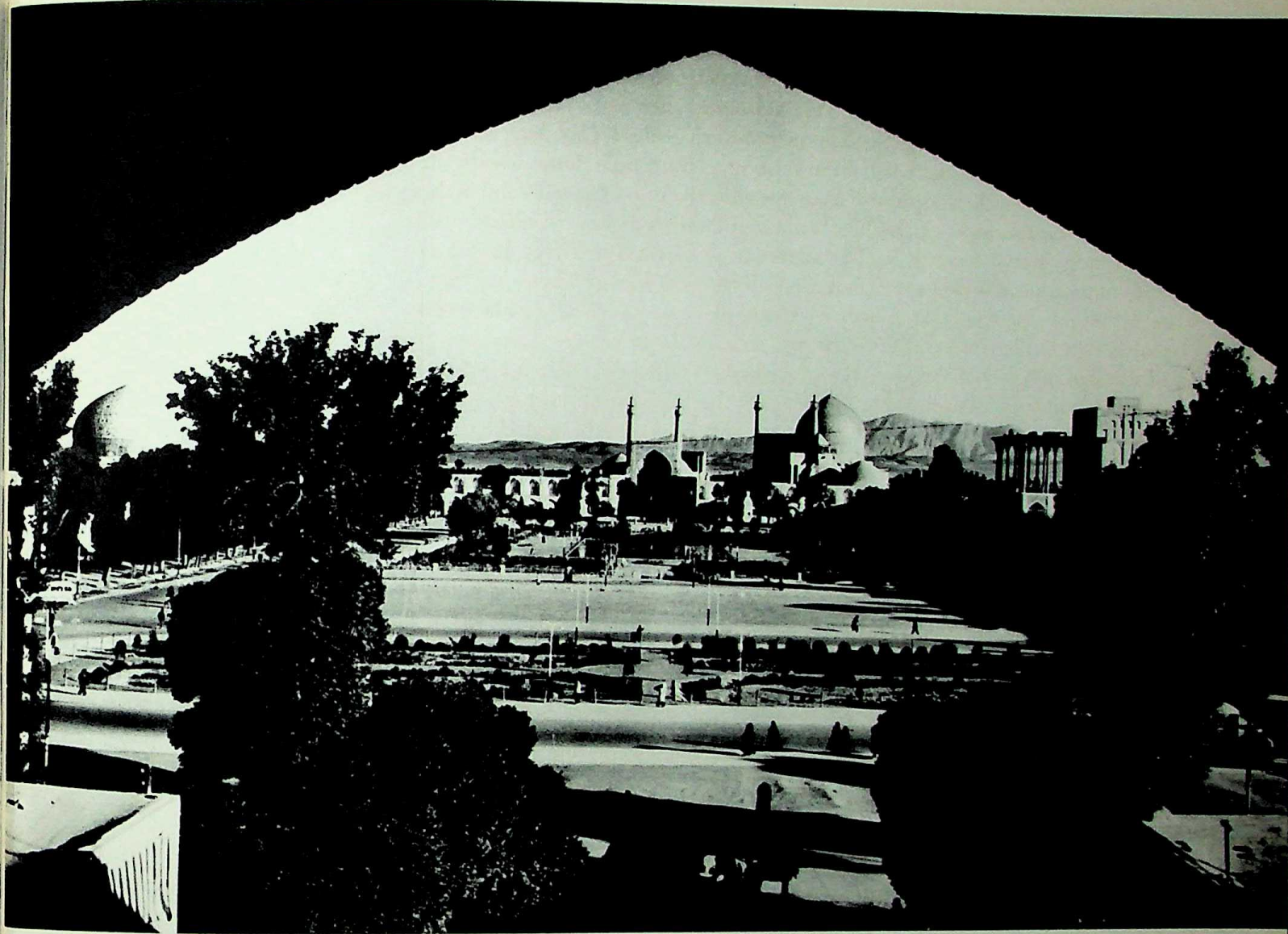


PLATE 78. *General view of Maidān, Isfahan.*
(*Courtesy of the Consulate of Iran, San Francisco*)

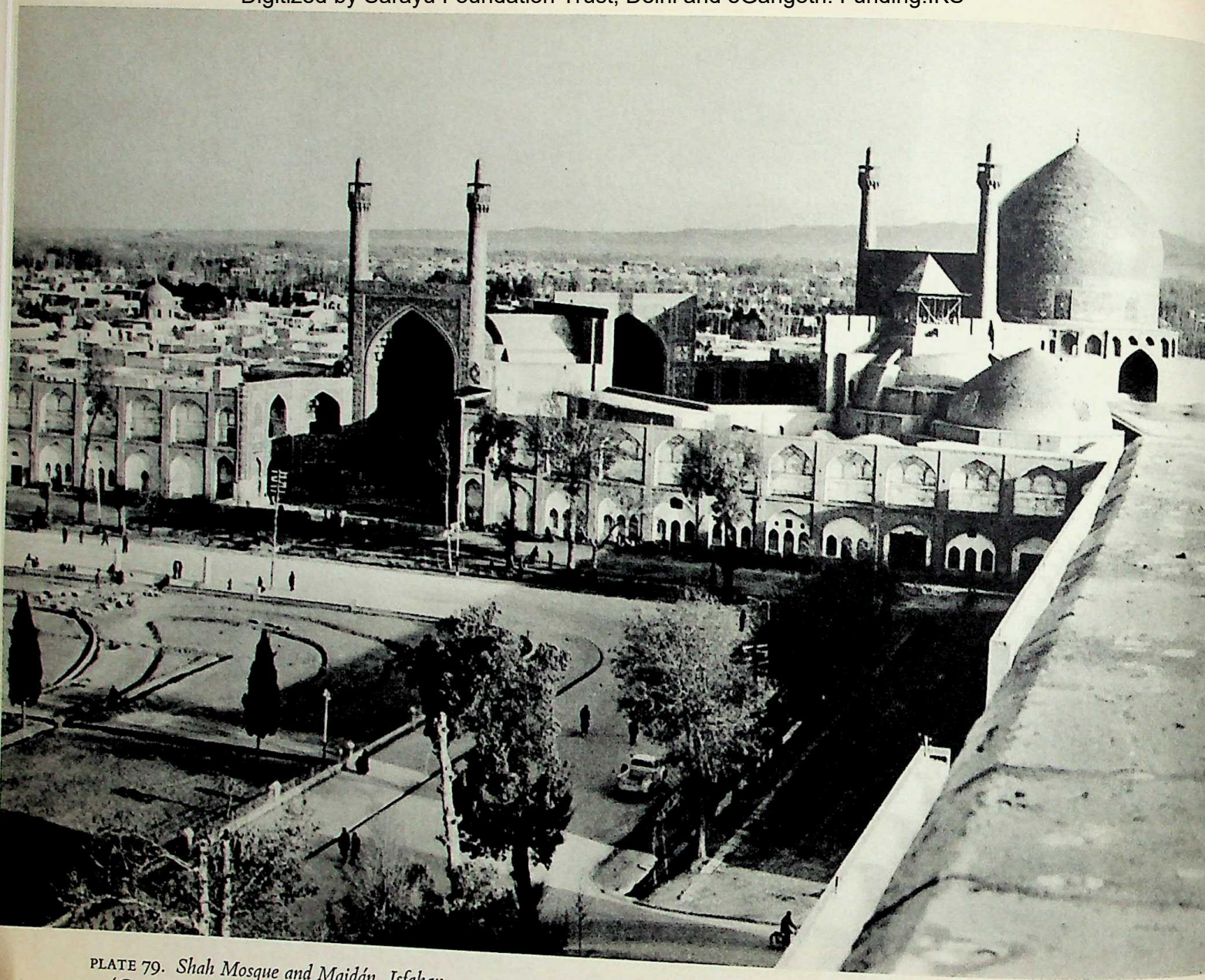


PLATE 79. *Shah Mosque and Maidán, Isfahan.*
(Courtesy of the Consulate of Iran, San Francisco)



PLATE 80. *Ali Qapu and Maidān, Isfahan.*
(Courtesy of the Consulate of Iran, San Francisco)



PLATE 79. *Shah Mosque and Maidán, Isfahan.*
(Courtesy of the Consulate of Iran, San Francisco)

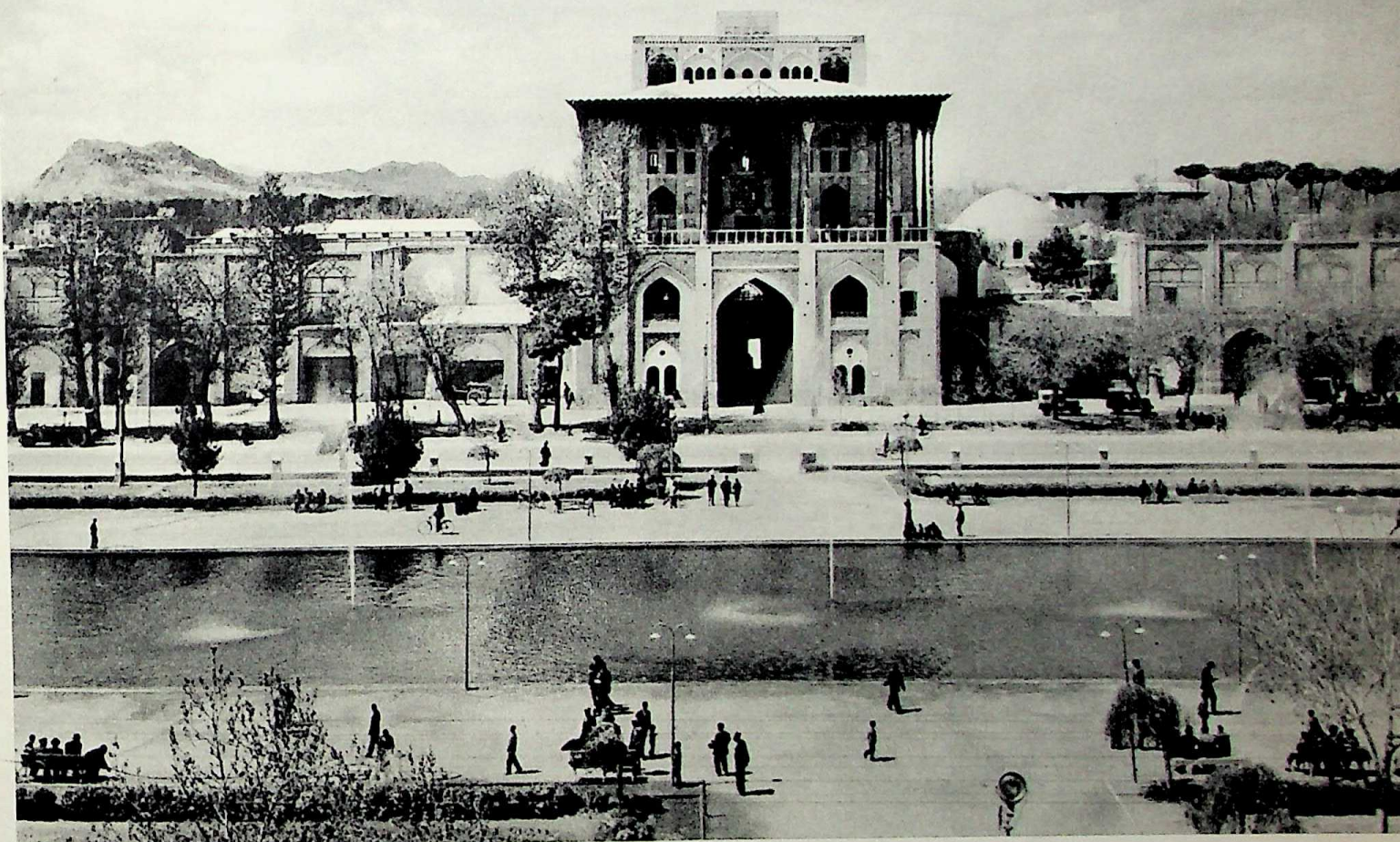
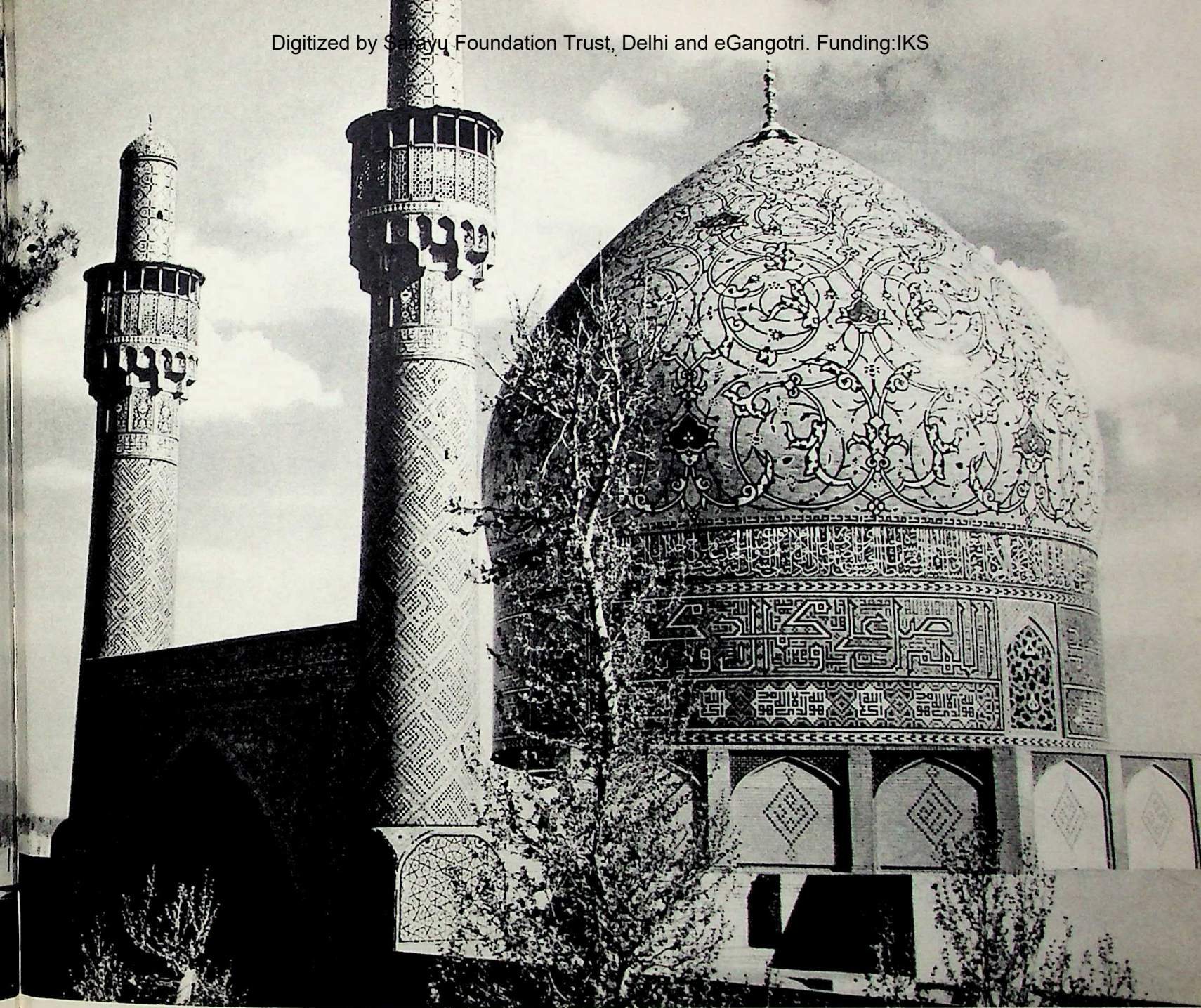


PLATE 80. Ali Qapu and Maidan, Isfahan.
(Courtesy of the Consulate of Iran, San Francisco)



PLATE 81. Lotfollah Mosque, Maidán, Isfahan.
(Courtesy of the Consulate of Iran, San Francisco)

PLATE 82. Dome and minarets, Chahar Bagh, Isfahan.
(Courtesy of the Consulate of Iran, San Francisco)



Decorative border featuring intricate Arabic calligraphy in a stylized script, likely Thuluth or similar, set against a dark background. The text is arranged in a horizontal band across the top of the page.

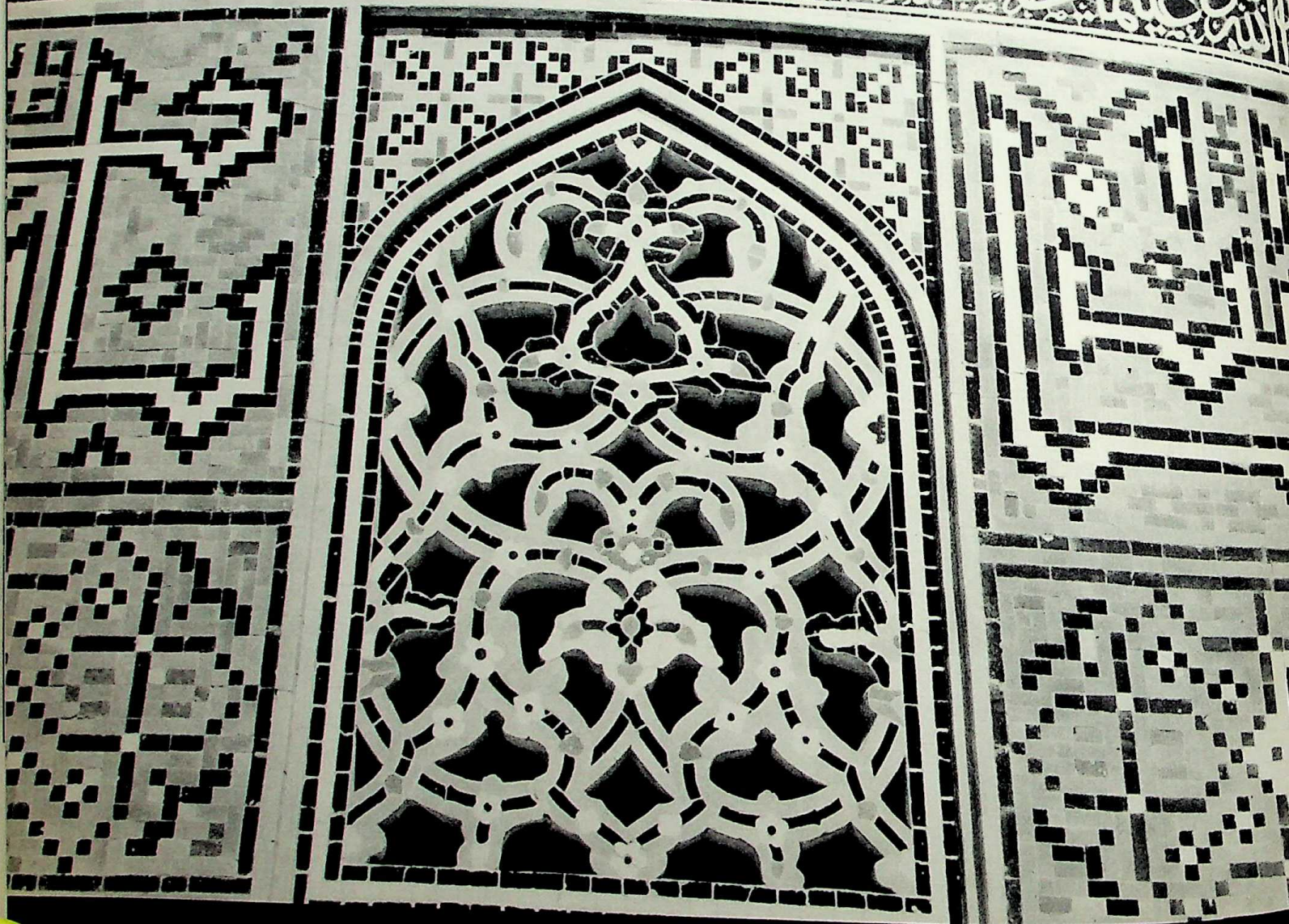


PLATE 83. Mosaic window in dome, Chahar Bagh, Isfahan. (Courtesy of the Consulate of Iran, Isfahan)

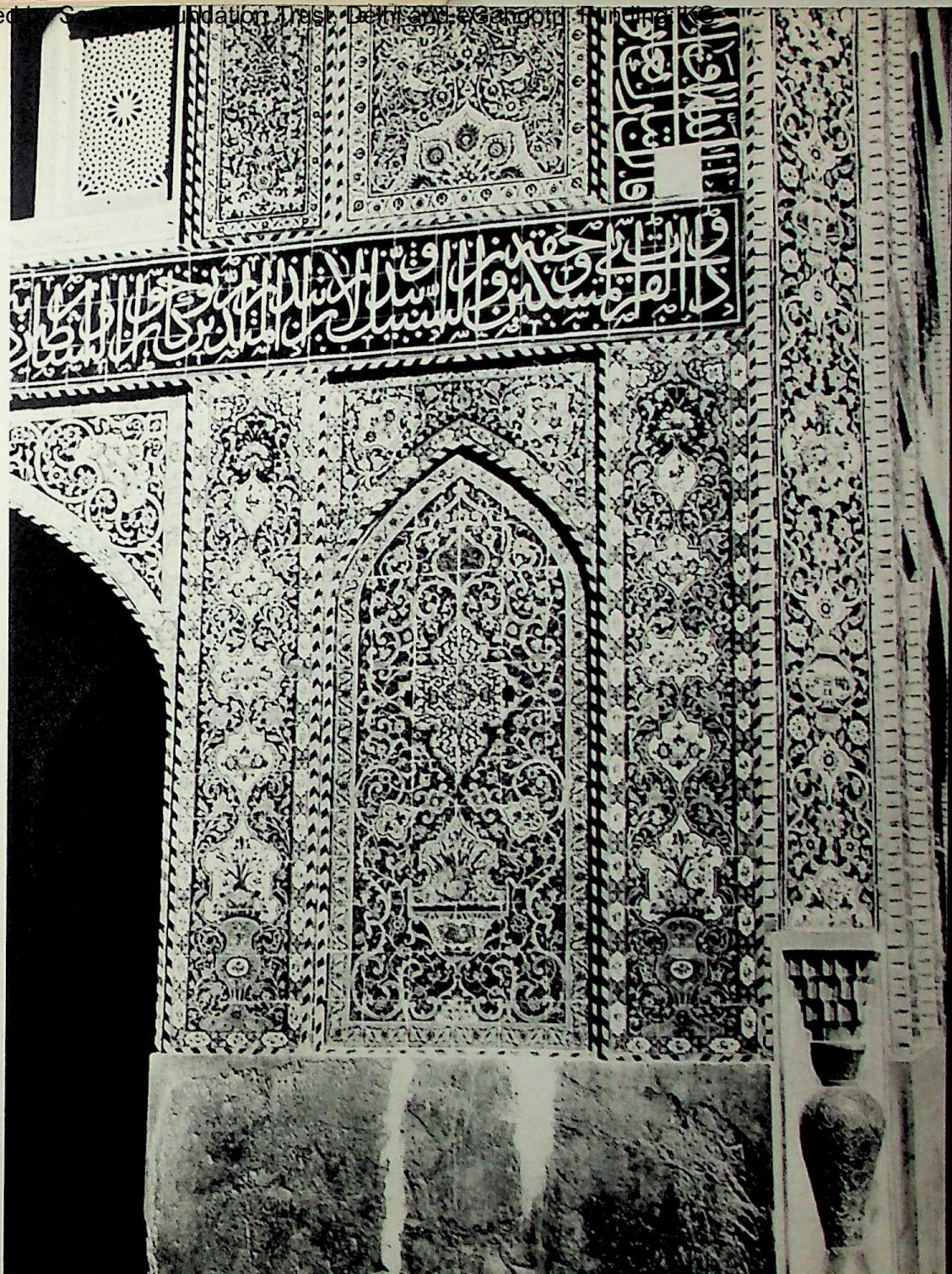


PLATE 84. Detail of square tile mosaics, Sayyed Mosque, Isfahan.



PLATE 85. *Lotfollah
Mosque from Maidán,
Isfahan.*

Isfahan everything is covered with tile. Sometimes the tiles are cut into small pieces which are inlaid like mosaics, but more frequently they are eight-inch-square panels on which portions of a larger design have been painted.

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ISFAHAN

The dome of the Lotfollah Mosque is tiled with a tan background over which a mosaic scrollwork of blue and white and yellow has been placed, but normally the domes of mosques have a turquoise background on which a similar floral scroll of dark blue, white, and yellow is inlaid. The walls and arches around the courtyard are of a darker blue, decorated with yellow patterns and using turquoise sparingly and only to heighten the effect. This contrast of blue and turquoise gives greater significance to the dome, which is, after all, the focal point of the mosque. It rises above the rectangular blueness in a different though allied form, and the difference of color emphasizes this relationship.

What is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the use of tiles is discovered when one stands in the interior of the Shah Mosque at Isfahan and looks out through one of the archways to the wall across the courtyard. Because of the varying force of the light on the exterior, the interior, and the archway halfway between the two, the tiles, which are sensitive to light, display every shade of blue. In the interior the blues are subdued and cool; they become more clear and hard at the archway; and across the courtyard they blaze like blue flames. Add to this the graceful shape of the archways and the perspective given by architectural planning, and one has a display of color and form unmatched in any other of the world's buildings.

The achievement of this beauty has not come about by chance but by a conscious and skilled attention to detail. At the Chahar Bagh, for example, there are many small archways which form galleries between the four main gates. These arches are all similarly shaped, but the pediment of each is decorated with a different style of tiling. The architectural form and the predominance of blue and yellow prevent the whole from becoming chaotic, while the variety of pattern in tiling brings the arcade to life. Similarly, the four great gateways are alike in shape but different in design. An examination of the various designs used in tiling the Chahar Bagh illustrates the care and skill with which the tiles were used. The dome has a turquoise background into which floral scrolls in yellow, brown, dark blue, and white have been inlaid. The two minarets which frame the archway are decorated with a geometric pattern of squares and triangles in red and blue and yellow on a turquoise background. The muezzin's gallery is predominantly yellow and, going downwards, is followed by a yellow band. Then comes a zigzag geometric pattern of white on turquoise which continues until the minaret merges with the façade of the building. This lower section takes the form of a series of

panels like Persian rugs which reach down to the ground. Each of these panels is different: the top one has a geometric pattern of yellow and turquoise, the next is a yellow mosaic on dark blue, the third a square panel of white on turquoise, and finally, just above the marble base, there is a yellow mosaic on a turquoise background.

Forming the rectangular gateway into which the pointed arch is set is a wide band of tiles upon which verses from the Koran are drawn in white characters on a dark blue background. Bordering this band are strips of alternating green and yellow tiles which outline the archway. The two triangular pediments left in the space between the square top and the curved arch are filled with elaborate floral scrolls of yellow on a dark blue background. The band around the first interior arch is green and white and ends towards the ground on either side with a small panel of bright yellow tiling. The various sections of the interior of the great arch display a similar variety in color and an even greater complexity in design.

To render in words the actual appearance of this sight is an almost impossible task, and analysis helps little to make it clear. The domes and façades of Isfahan are waterfalls of blue, and their colors are both exciting and relaxing. As the façade glitters in the sun, it is like a rug of sapphires and gold with here and there the harsher blue of diamonds; but as the light changes, the colors also change into new designs and new combinations. The interiors provide a different experience. At the Lotfollah, for example, the small chamber beneath the dome is entirely enclosed. The light that enters from the four double-grilled windows is refracted like the rays of the sun when they are seen from under water. Indeed, with the turquoise floor and the varieties of blue and gold that rise towards the intricately designed blue dome of the Lotfollah, one has somehow the feeling of being submerged in a watery grotto. It is as though the Persians, always threatened by the invading sands of the desert and scorching under the hot sun, built this cool interior as a sanctuary where they could be reminded of the things most precious to them—water and the cool evening sky.

The mosques of India—indeed most mosques outside of the city of Isfahan—are purely intellectual affairs. Only the Wazir Khan Mosque at Lahore and perhaps the great Turkish mosques at Istanbul have much humanity in them. The interior of the Lotfollah has no consciously emotional appeal but it takes into consideration the need for coolness and calmness, which are the attributes of blue,* after the dazzling heat and dust of the square. Like the cathedrals of Chartres and Bourges,

* Interior decorators, for example, always recommend blue for dining rooms, since that color induces calm and quiet and therefore good digestion.

which are more admired than other Gothic cathedrals largely because of their stained glass, the great Isfahan mosques are magnificent because of their colors.

The achievement of Shah Abbas and the other rulers of the Safavid dynasty who built these mosques is not widely known in the world, even though they combined excellence in architectural form, design of details, and surface decoration in one work of art. Most buildings are fortunate if they possess two of these features, but the Shah Mosque, the Chahar Bagh, and the Lotfollah contain all three, seemingly as a matter of course.

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ISFAHAN

NINE · PERSEPOLIS

WHAT THE ordinary person knows about the ancient Persians comes mostly from Greek sources. The stories of the great battles of Marathon and Thermopylae between the Greeks and the Persians are known principally through Herodotus, and virtually all that the Westerner knows of conditions in ancient Persia comes from the account of Xenophon of the return of the ten thousand from the court of Artaxerxes at Persepolis. This Greek bias tends to make the ancient Persians appear as a people of mighty military power whose great kings were the prototypes of later Napoleons and Hitlers. From the Greek point of view, the Persians were "the enemy"—the barbarians from the East who lived in sinful magnificence and who, despite their strength, possessed few of the virtues of Athens or Sparta. Most of all, these Greek sources tend to create the impression that the ancient Iranians were a strange and mysterious people, bound irrevocably to the East and therefore quite foreign to the Greek-inspired heritage of Europe and America.

The mysteriousness attached to Persia is largely caused by ignorance of the life and history of the country, be it in ancient or modern times. In Western school-rooms, the student is given glimpses of the Greeks as people: of Demosthenes practicing his oratory on the seashore, of Diogenes sitting in his tub, and of Socrates tasting bitter almonds. But to find out anything at all about the human beings who made up and controlled the Persian empire it seems necessary actually to go to Iran and to Persepolis, its ancient capital.

Persepolis is important among the world's ruins both for its antiquity and for

PLATE 86. *Doorway relief, king killing evil beast, Tachara, Persepolis.*



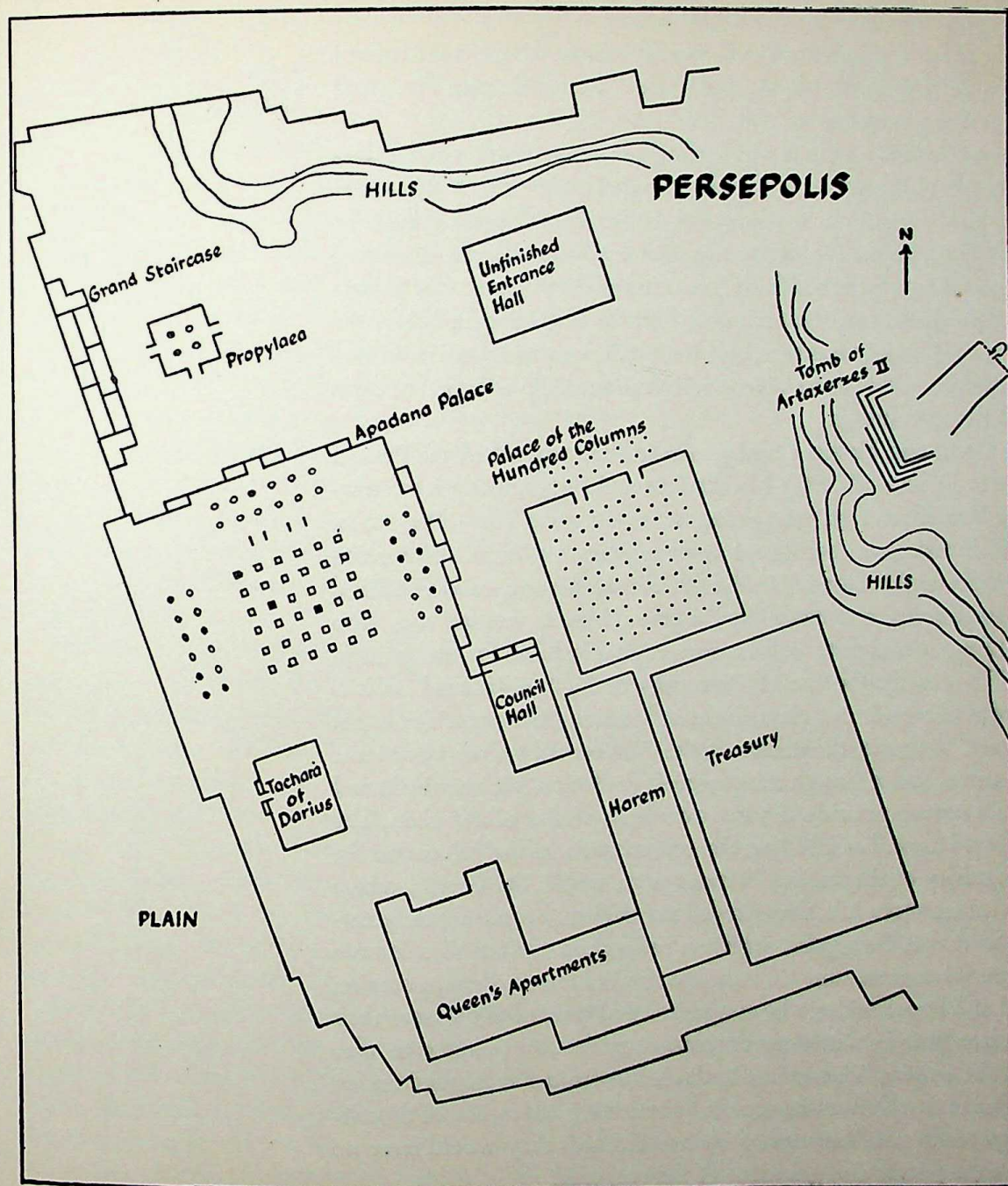


FIGURE 17. Map of Persepolis.

its degree of artistic achievement. But it, too, has an aura of mystery about it: one is told of the fantastic palaces long buried in the south Iranian desert at the foot of a mountain, one sees photographs of flying bulls with bearded human faces, and Persepolis seems almost too exotic to be true.

When these ruins are actually visited, this feeling of mystery and wonder does not disappear, but it takes on a somewhat different aspect. One drives across the empty, dusty plain, alert to catch a first glimpse of the ruined palaces built by Darius the Great and Xerxes, but for a long time there is only a desert stretching away from the flat road. Then, quite suddenly, one arrives. At a distance the palaces melt insignificantly into the side of the mountain, but for one standing below the great terrace with its wide, stately staircase, and with sufficient imagination to picture the roofs and columns which must have towered about the platform, the ruins seem enormous and overwhelming.

It was Cyrus the Great and his son Cambyses who first established the Persian empire, extending it to include all of the Middle East and Egypt. They were warrior kings, and their capital was at Parsagadae, some 50 miles from Persepolis. Darius the Great, their successor, continued their military tradition, conquering portions of Greece, India, and Ethiopia. He also established the empire as a political unit, built roads, struck coins, and established a post office. It was he, too, who between 518 and 512 B.C. decided to build a new capital suitable for the greatest empire on earth. Why exactly the site of Persepolis or Takht-i-Jamshid, as it is known in Persian, was chosen is not clear, but the location of many cities is not explained. At any rate, it was in the center of the Fars country from which the Achaemenian kings came, and although it is placed at the foot of the mountain and not on its summit, its terrace provides a view over many miles of the plain. The English writer, Robert Payne, has said that the construction of the palaces on the plain suggests the maturity of the ancient Persians since, unlike the Greeks, whose Athenian Acropolis surmounts a hill, they needed no physical props to their greatness. It might be added that Persepolis, which is insignificant when seen from a distance and immense when seen close to, is an apt symbol for the Persian empire, for Darius respected and honored those he conquered and wanted to preserve their self-esteem. At the same time he would never permit any doubts to exist as to who was the real ruler of the empire. Visitors and ambassadors from afar might wonder, as they crossed the desert that leads to Persepolis, where the great capital of the self-styled King of Kings really was, but once they had arrived, they would have no further doubts about the power and grandeur of the emperor.

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MANY
GOLDEN
AGES

Persepolis was originally designed as a ceremonial palace. It was used as a winter residence, and there the ceremonies of the new year were observed. Darius built the Apadana Palace, but the larger part of what remains of the site today was built by his son Xerxes and by the later kings. There are, in fact, many palaces at Persepolis, and before it was destroyed by fire by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C., less than 200 years after it was begun, it must have been one of the greatest architectural complexes on earth, hardly equaled even in modern times.

There is only one entrance : a long double staircase which terminates at the top of the terrace, some 50 feet above the level of the plain below. Directly in front is the Propylaea, the main entrance hall, which still has the remains of stone benches around its interior to indicate that it was used as a waiting chamber for ambassadors and dignitaries of the empire. The Propylaea is probably the most picturesque of all the buildings at Persepolis, for its two principal doors are guarded by enormous stone bulls with human heads of ancient Persians wearing tall cylindrical hats and long curly beards. Little remains of the building except four doorposts and two interior columns, but even in a state of ruin these mythological creatures cast about them an aura of strangeness and, what is perhaps more important, the impression of a personality. They are both grand and intimidating—suitable for a palace of the King of Kings.

Because of its position at the foot of Koh-i-Rahmat, the Mount of Mercy, it was not possible for the Achaemenian architects to extend the royal city in a direct line back from the main entrance. Instead, the avenue proceeds only a short way to another entrance hall, which was never completed, where it turns to the right and enters the main courtyard. At the far side of the courtyard stands the enormous Hall of the Hundred Columns, which had a forecourt guarded by immense stone horses whose height from the ground must have exceeded 30 feet. To the right is the Apadana Palace, where thirteen of the original stone columns are still in position. Leading off from it are the many other palaces of Persepolis: the Tachara, the Central Palace, the harem, and the private palace of Xerxes, which cover, in all, an area of 150,000 square yards.

It would be tedious to describe each of the palaces of Persepolis in turn, for although the extent of these palaces built 2,500 years ago is astonishing, much is in a state of ruin. One has to imagine the roofs, the curtains and rugs, the mosaic tile floors, the fountains and gardens, for Persepolis has suffered not only from the flames set to it by Alexander—which turned to ash the silks and brocades and the tall cedar columns—but also from vandals of later periods who defaced the statuary

and the stone friezes. The fact that many of the faces of the stone reliefs have been obliterated suggests that much of this vandalism was carried out by fanatical Moslems a thousand years ago.

Still, enough remains at Persepolis to give one an idea of what it must have been like. Recent excavations have revealed enormous stone capitals carved to represent the heads of two bulls which are connected by a common back. These capitals are hewn from one piece of rock and are six feet in length by two feet in breadth and four feet in height. That stone capitals of such a gigantic size could be hoisted to the top of columns over 60 feet tall is an astonishing engineering feat. Equally astonishing is the skill with which these animal capitals were carved. Although the same design was used throughout the Hall of the Hundred Columns, and even though they were to be seen only at a great height, each animal is carved with minute care, the collars around their necks and the hairs of their manes being easily distinguishable.

Many of the columns were of cedar, brought to Persepolis from the Lebanon, but those of the Apadana were carved from stone. Those that still stand have been softened by the sun to a golden color, which heightens their contrast with the blue sky. Unlike squat Doric columns, they are tall and thin, fluted along their sides and resting on bases shaped like lotus flowers. There was nothing impractical about them, however, for they supported a series of complex capitals upon which were placed the heavy wooden crossbeams of the roof.

Wandering from palace to palace at Persepolis, one is struck by the great variety of architectural styles used by the ancient Persians. To be sure, like the Greeks, they relied heavily on the use of stone columns, especially for their larger buildings like the Apadana, which, although not the largest palace at Persepolis, has an area of nearly 9,000 square yards. The smaller palaces, however, did not entirely rely on columns. Instead, their roofs were supported by walls of solid masonry, broken here and there by windows and doorways. It is possible that brick was also used, for little is left of the Tachara of Darius and of the Central Palace but the entranceways and staircases.

Of all the remains at Persepolis, with the exception of the staircases, these entrances are the most striking and interesting. The door jambs are usually a good 15 feet high and are so wide that the entrances might better be described as passageways than as doorways. These are normally but not invariably carved from one piece of stone. On the interior surface large statues are carved in relief. These are arranged in pairs on either side of the entrance passage and usually consist of only one or two figures. One of the most frequent of the designs used shows the Achae-

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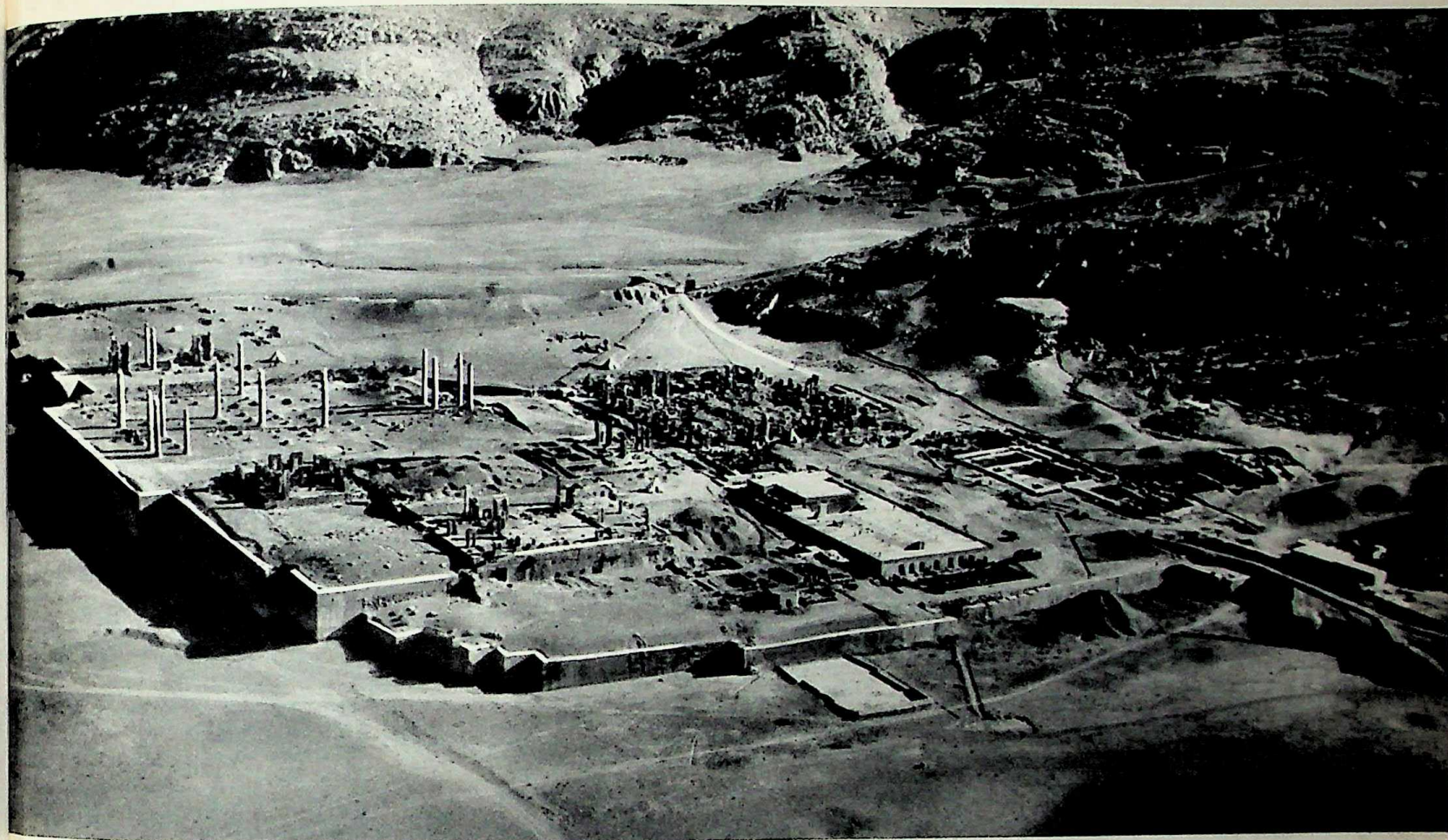


PLATE 87. *Aerial view of Persepolis.*
(Courtesy of the Oriental Institute, Chicago)



PLATE 88. *Propylaea, Persepolis.*

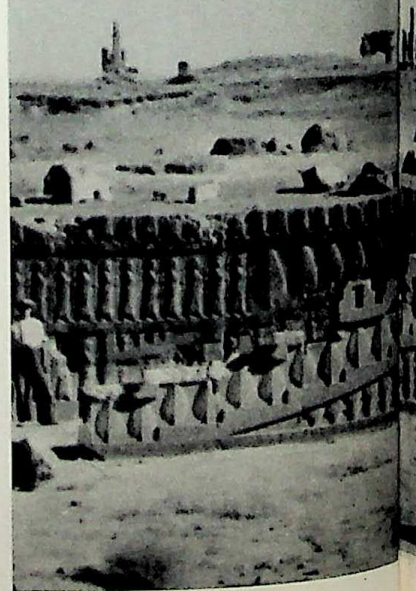


PLATE 89. *Northern staircase, Apadana Palace, Persepolis.*
(Courtesy of the Oriental Institute, Chicago)





PLATE 90. Corner of Tachara and columns of Apadana Palace, Persepolis.
(Courtesy of the Oriental Institute, Chicago)

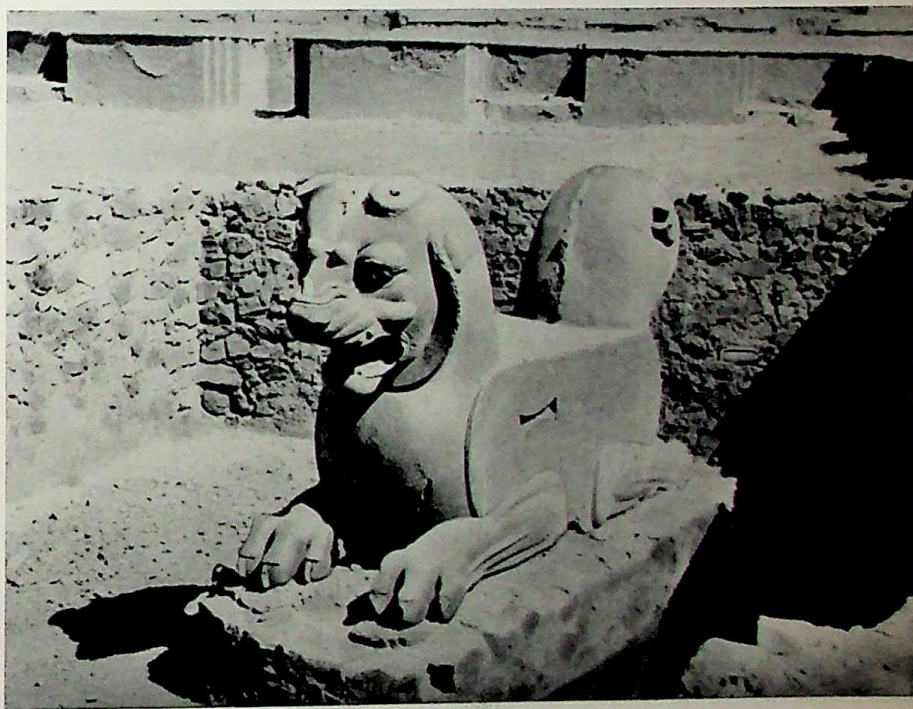
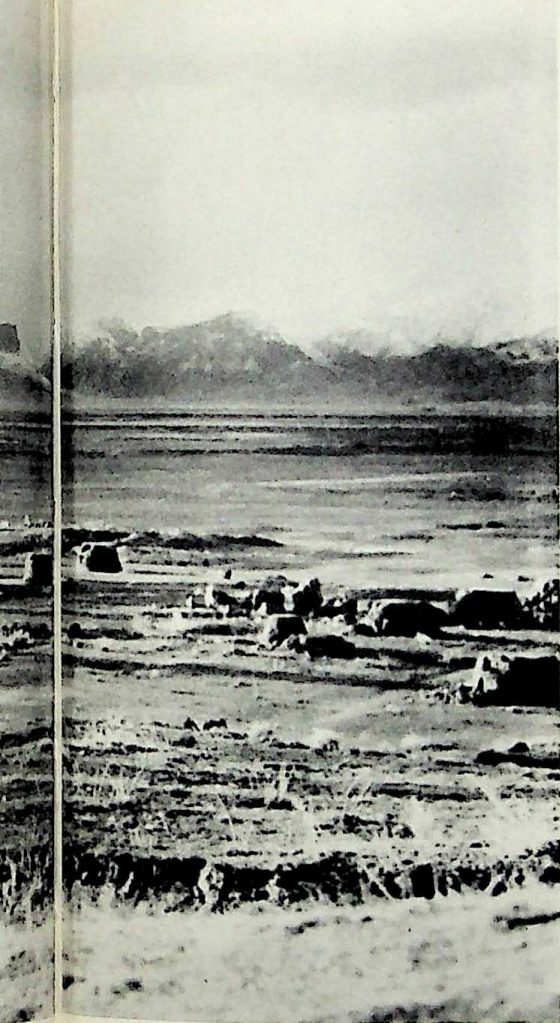


PLATE 91. *Capital of column, Hall of the Hundred Columns, Persepolis.*

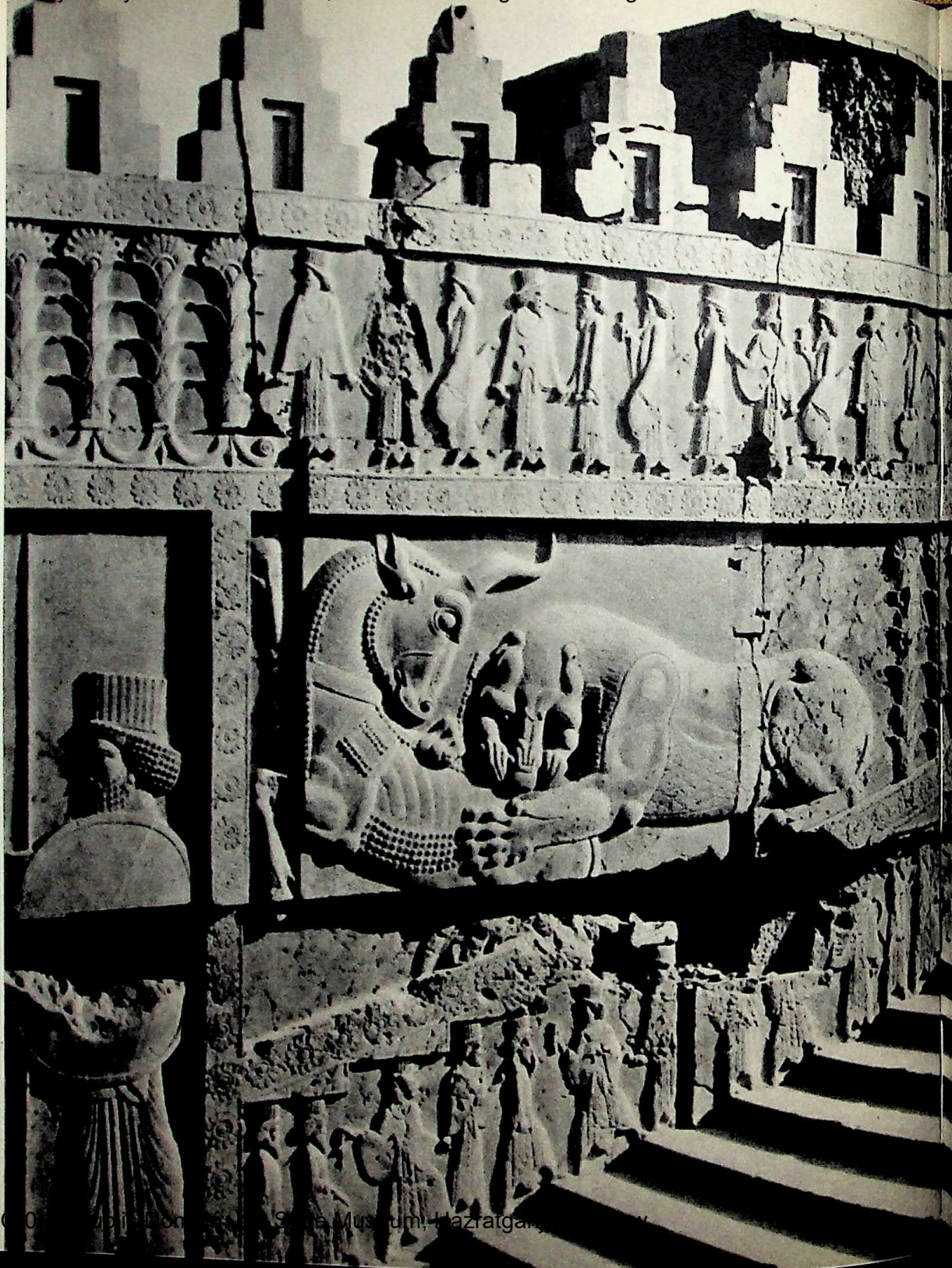
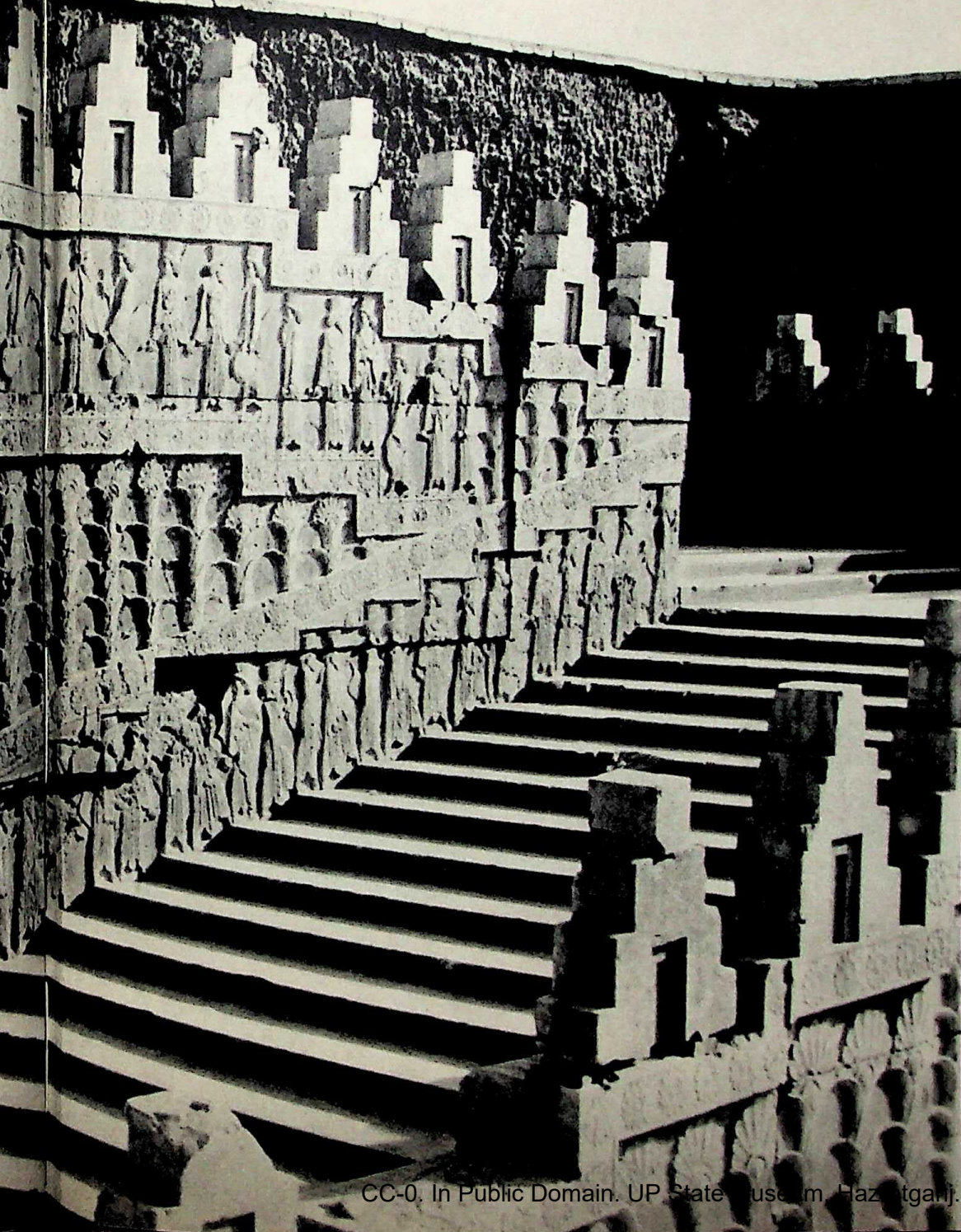


PLATE 92. Staircase,
Council Hall, Persepolis.
(Courtesy of the
Oriental Institute, Chicago)



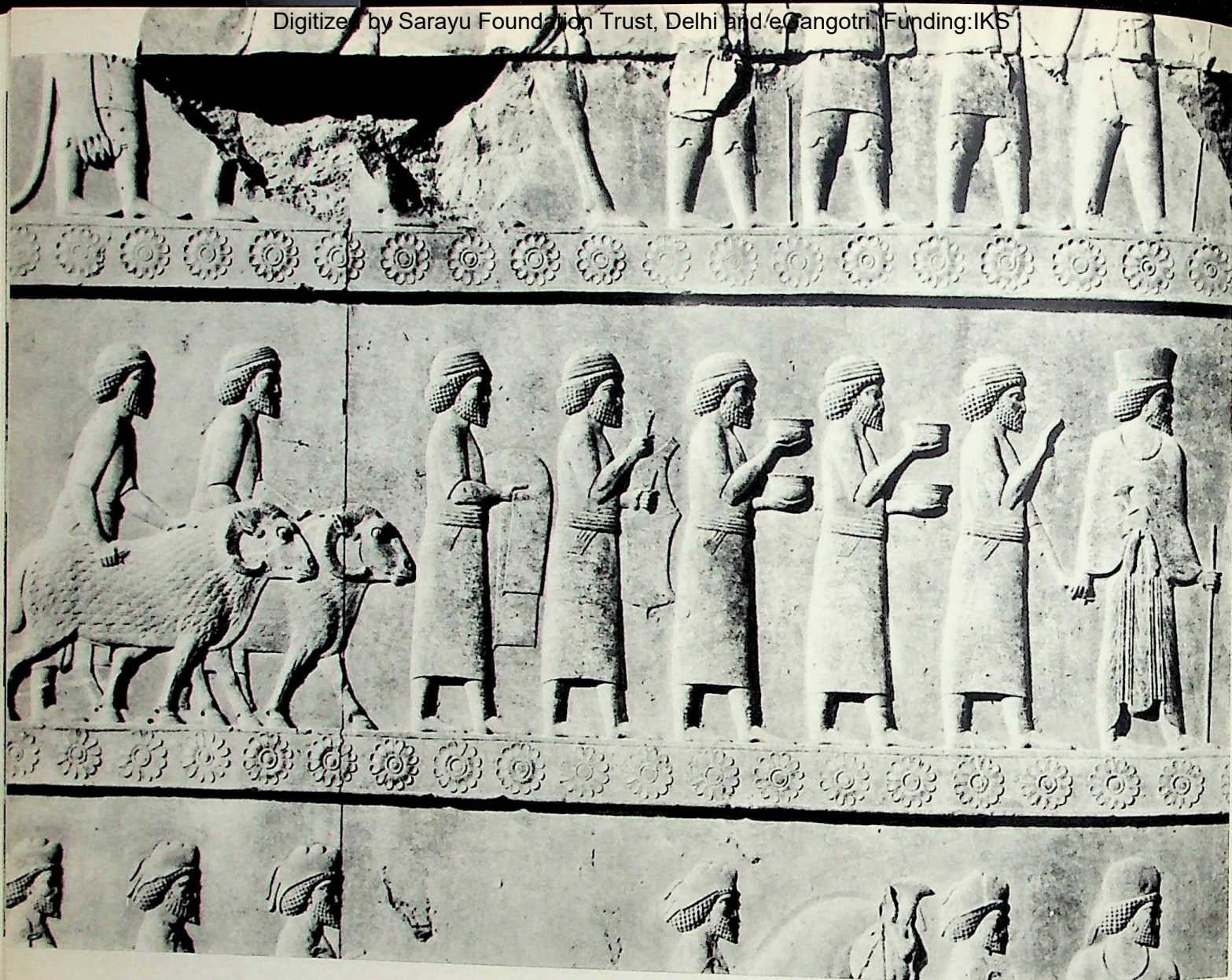
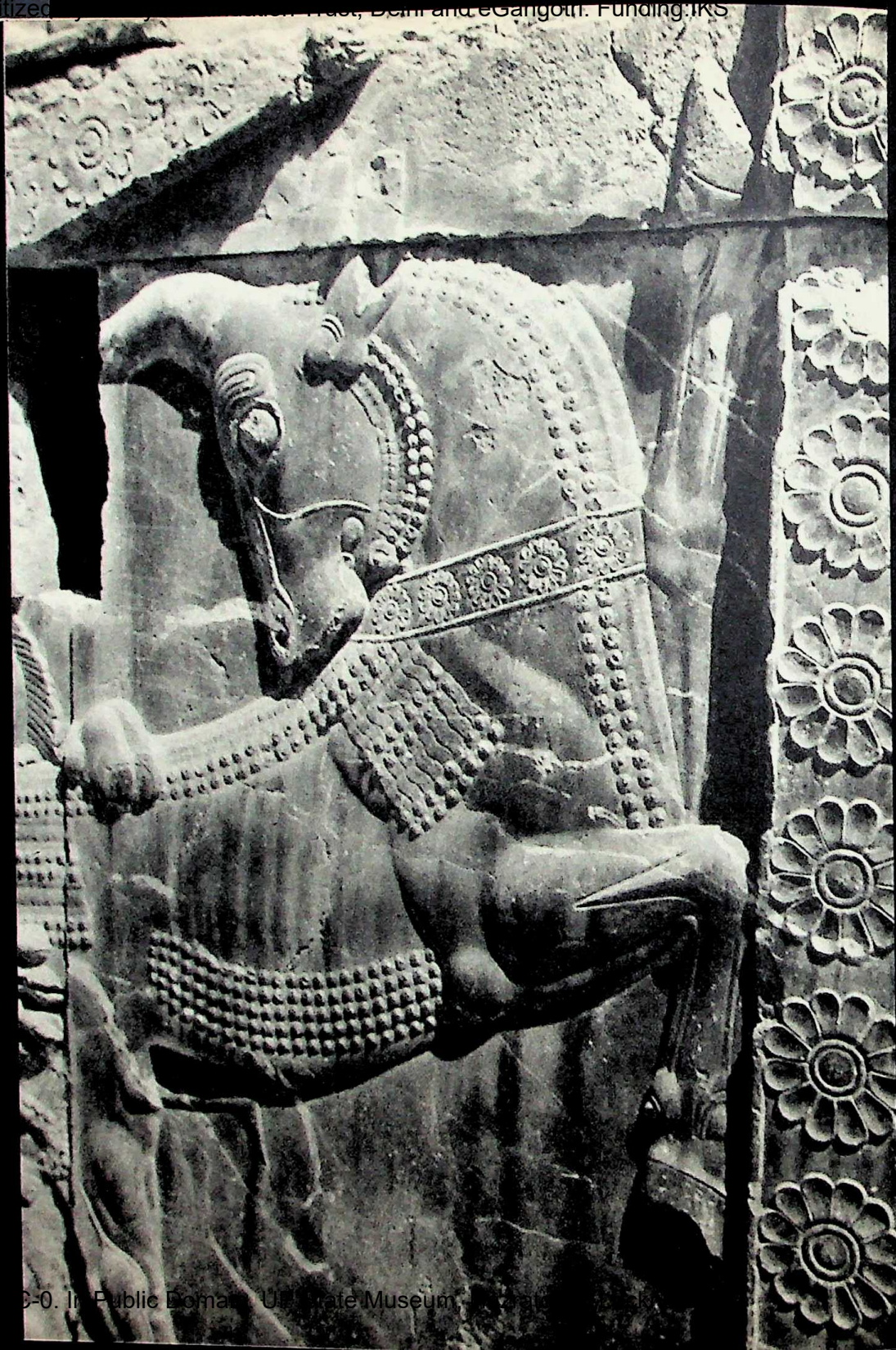


PLATE 93. Staircase relief, tribute procession of Cilicians, Apadana Palace, Persepolis.
(Courtesy of the Oriental Institute, Chicago)



PLATE 94. Staircase relief, tribute procession, Apadana Palace, Persepolis.
(Courtesy of the Oriental Institute, Chicago)



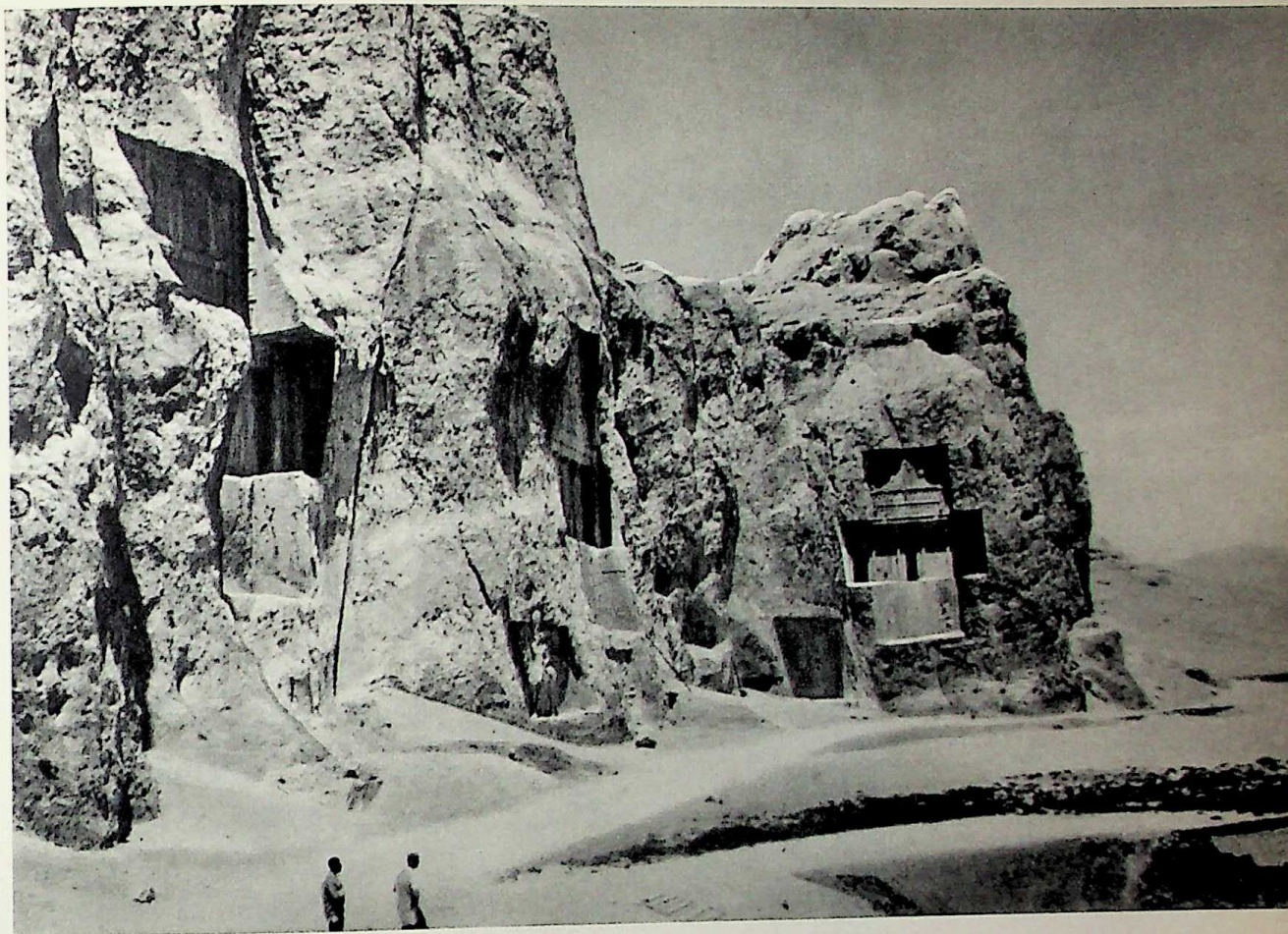


PLATE 96. *Tombs of Darius the Great, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes I at Naqsh-e Rostam.*

PLATE 95. *Detail of carving on staircase, Apadana Palace, Persepolis*



PLATE 97. *Tomb of Artaxerxes II with columns of Apadana Palace in foreground, Persepolis.*

menian king slaying a ferocious mythological beast—half lion, half bird, representing Ahriman, the Zoroastrian devil—by thrusting a short dagger into its stomach. The portrayal of the beast differs in the various reliefs, since the devil has many forms, but the depiction of the struggle is always the same. With his right hand, the king holds the beast by its horn and with his left thrusts a dagger into its belly. The composition is unified, and each figure is reliant on the other. Yet there is no haste, no panic. Although the issue is decisive, the King of Kings always wins, and thus good, as representative of the great god Auramazda, triumphs over evil. In contrast to these almost static productions, Greek sculpture is extremely athletic: muscles strain, energy is expended, and there is always motion and action. The carvings of the ancient Persians, on the other hand, are calm and dignified, and the statues and reliefs are so full of confidence and pride that they seem to say that no question need ever be asked about the greatness and rightness of the empire.

The other door reliefs reflect the same serene elegance. A much-used design is that of Xerxes taking a calm stroll, while behind walk two much smaller figures, one holding an umbrella to shade the king's head and the other a feather fan to keep off the insects. Yet others show the king sitting on his throne, shaded by an umbrella. Enormous care was taken in the execution of all of these reliefs, and every detail of dress and physical appearance is included. There are even marks to show where golden bracelets and necklaces were once placed as adornments to the statuary. But most of all one is impressed by the calm pride which every one of these figures represents. Each is a perfect composition, finely balanced and complete, and nowhere is there unseemly haste or lack of dignity.

These door panels are remarkable enough, but even they fail to compare with the staircases which lead up to the various palaces of Persepolis. These staircases are constructed in pairs, with two ramps leading from the ground parallel to the base and meeting at the top, where they form a small platform which juts out from the upper level of the terrace. In this way, there is an area available alongside the steps for statues and carvings in relief. These staircases are all built in the same way, but the best preserved example is the eastern staircase of the Apadana Palace, which until twenty-five years ago was hidden underground and was therefore preserved from the vandals. The staircases themselves are pleasantly designed, and their shallow steps suggest a people who liked a leisurely life. More interesting, however, are the long rows of carved figures that appear along the ramp and on the outside face of the steps. These reliefs, carved on polished black granite, show warriors and ambassadors bringing tribute to the great king. All in profile, as in the larger doorway carvings, they march in rows, some of them even being portrayed as walking

up the steps. No detail of appearance or dress is omitted, and even the decoration on a soldier's scabbard is included, as well as the geometrical design on his buckle. The continual use of the profile detracts from the reality of the human figures, but the many varied poses they assume make up for it. Certain faults in depicting human anatomy can also be observed, but they too are compensated for by the skill shown in the carving of animals.

In general, since the design for the reliefs is the same at all of the staircases, it is possible to divide the types of carvings into three groups. The first consist of small figures of armed warriors—Medes and Persians—who are placed alternately along one side of the staircase to act as guardians of the royal palace. These figures are repeated almost in life size in the outside of the staircase projection; only there they are separated, the Medes carrying large round shields, while the Persians in their conical hats hold spears. These members of the imperial guard, like their counterparts in real life, are found everywhere in the reliefs and constitute one of the main features of the staircase friezes.

Another much-repeated motif, which is symbolic or heraldic, is the depiction of a lion attacking a bull, gripping the bull's back with its claws and digging its teeth into the animal's flesh. Like the panels which show Xerxes fighting the evil beast, these two have a formal unity. The lion's head is carved in a frontal view, and is the only departure from the profile that exists in all of the friezes, while the bull's head is turned backward over its shoulder towards the attacking enemy. Both are carved with realistic detail, yet despite the violence of the action, the figures are calm and dignified. It is as though each realized that the result of the battle had been foretold and therefore stoically accepted it. In heraldic terms the lion represents the power of the great king, and the design was therefore used as a royal insignia. The panels depicting these animals normally appear in pairs like medallions on either side of the staircase.

The other important activity represented in the stone friezes is the bearing of gifts by emissaries from the royal dominions to the great king. It is here that the greatest historical interest lies, for an impression is given of the vastness of the empire and of the many peoples of whom it consisted. Medes carry vases and jewels, Elamites bring weapons and lions, Parthians lead a double-humped camel, Egyptians bring a bull, Armenians a horse, Babylonians carry gold and silver and lead a bison, Scythians in pointed caps bear gifts of material, Assyrians present weapons, Phoenicians bring vases and a chariot drawn by two horses, Lydians carry precious cloth, Afghans lead a camel, Indians bring their offerings in baskets suspended from poles borne on their shoulders, Thracians carry weapons and lead a horse, Arabs

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bring a dromedary, Somalis a goat, and Ethiopians present a giraffe. Here indeed is a panorama of all of the Middle East as it was 2,500 years ago, and although there are few of the homely details that are found, for example, in the Indian caves of Ajanta, there is nevertheless an individualized portrayal of an empire that stretched from the Indus to beyond the Nile. Here too there is great variety, for each of the representatives of these subject natives is depicted as an individual and in his own costume. The Cappadocians, for example, wear soft felt hats, while the Somalis wear what we would call Balaclava helmets. The Ethiopians have curly hair cut short, while the Armenians wear theirs long and are bearded. The many animals, which are designed even more carefully than the human figures, also give variety to the panoramic scene, and where there are blank spaces left, these are filled in by evergreens and palm trees.

Altogether, these staircase friezes are the finest artistic creations at Persepolis, and they demonstrate the taste and skill of the artists who created them. There is no slovenliness anywhere and no sign of haste or incompetent planning.

In a sense, this achievement is remarkable, for it seems so unlikely. As one walks about the palaces of Persepolis, one soon becomes aware of two persistent features of the place. The first is that the same designs are repeated over and over again. Not only are the bull capitals of the columns identical, but the same staircase friezes are reproduced everywhere. Each palace has several staircases, and at each of these one finds the guardian Medes and Persians, the lion attacking the bull, and the emissaries bearing gifts. While these staircases may differ slightly in detail, in general plan they are identical. Normally, as for example in Moghul art, repetition is deadening, since the artistry becomes mechanical, but here, perhaps because of the complexity and variety contained in each design, the friezes are lively and interesting.

This is no small achievement, and it leads to the second fact about Persepolis which normally would have made the achievement even less likely. This fact is that all of the designs in relief have but one purpose: the glorification of a human being who styled himself the King of Kings. In other countries there have been similar concentrations of adoration and praise upon one man or upon one lineage, but usually there are also known qualifications of this praise that make it understandable. Sometimes it is known that the king was considered as a representation of God on earth: the Inca kings, for example, assumed this role. Sometimes, as with certain twentieth-century dictators, the glorification of a mortal man symbolizes the glorification of the state, the one being a representation of the other. But usually where this glorification occurs one finds a deterioration in the quality of the arts. The Inca ruins at Cuzco and Machu Picchu, for example, are remarkable only as feats of en-

gineering and masonry. On the other hand, at the pre-Inca ruins of Tiahuanaco in Bolivia there is evidence that once the people had enough artistic sense to be able to produce the fine carvings on the famous Gate of the Sun. But the Inca empire somehow stamped out this creative spirit, replacing it only by an ability to construct massive and plain buildings. In countries like Spain, Germany, and Italy, where dictators have ruled, one finds a similar deterioration of the arts during the periods of totalitarian control. This evidence suggests that the art of Persepolis should also have been inferior.

As one visits the famous ruins of the East—Angkor, Pagan, Anuradhapura, and Ellora—one gradually comes to the conclusion that great art is religious art, or at least art inspired by otherworldly motives. And one need only to look at the dead palaces of the Moghul kings of India to see what happens when that inspiration fails. Of course, to say that only religious art is great art is not entirely fair, for in India, Ceylon, Burma, and Cambodia there is hardly any other kind of art, since the people built monuments only for their gods. Yet what great art there is is religious art.

Thus Persepolis presents a problem that is connected with the very source of artistic creation. At Persepolis there is an undoubtedly high degree of artistic skill—the bas-reliefs alone are evidence enough of this. It is also an art that is purely secular, being devoted to the glorification of Darius, Xerxes, and others of the Achaemenian dynasty. Furthermore, there is no evidence at Persepolis of religious building. The only Zoroastrian fire temple to be found is located some miles from Persepolis at Naqsh-e Rostam, where four of the Persian kings were buried. It almost appears to have been built as a salve to the conscience.

These circumstances make it desirable to know the exact position of religion in the Achaemenian court. What is known of Zoroastrianism itself provides little information on this point. And the only source of knowledge that exists at Persepolis is found in the tablets inscribed by the great kings to identify the palace buildings they had built. Here, for example, is a translation of the inscription on the Apadana staircase:

“A great god is Auramazda, who created this earth, who created yonder heaven, who created man, who created welfare for man, who made Xerxes king, one king of many, one Lord of many. I am Xerxes the Great King, King of Kings, king of the countries having many kinds of people, king of this great earth far and wide, the son of Darius the king, the Achaemenian.

“Says Xerxes the Great King: What was done by me here, and what was done by me elsewhere, all that I did by the will of Auramazda. May Auramazda with the gods protect both me and my kingdom, and what was done by me.”

In this inscription one finds a curious mixture of pride and humility. The burden of the message suggests that the god should receive the credit, yet the name of the king is so surrounded by adjectives of adulation that the sincerity of the message seems doubtful. Indeed, other inscriptions at Persepolis use almost exactly the same wording. Yet even though it may be a formula, it is a more agreeable one than the modern kind which merely states: "This foundation stone was laid by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales on the occasion of his visit in 1907."

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Although the inscriptions at Persepolis fail to provide complete evidence on the nature of the kingship, one is probably justified in assuming that the attitudes of Xerxes and Artaxerxes toward their positions was similar to that taken by the Stuart kings in England, who really believed—and not merely for political purposes—that they were kings by divine right. History has shown that this is a heady doctrine that usually brings its upholders to grief; and the collapse of Achaemenian empire tends to substantiate this view. At the same time, it is a doctrine readily accepted by the common people; the widespread feeling of grief and horror that existed in England after the Puritans beheaded Charles I is well known. In addition, Darius and his son Xerxes were famous for their justice and mercy and for their desire for the happiness of others (does not the inscription state that the god Auramazda "created welfare for man"?). It is a fact, for example, that there was no forced labor at Persepolis; rather, every builder and artisan was paid a wage from the royal treasury. In other words, to the extent that was then possible, men were free. The Persian empire was not a police state in the modern sense of that phrase. Indeed it would seem that the Achaemenian emperors were more humane than the Buddhist kings of Burma who executed the architects of their great temples lest they construct a greater temple elsewhere.

What first appears as godlessness or unpardonable vanity in the palaces of Persepolis can therefore better be explained as dignity and pride in mankind. The civilization of the Achaemenians seems to have been very mature. It had none of the ideological conflicts that existed in Greece; everything in matters spiritual and material seems to have been worked out and settled. What resulted was a calm and dignified way of living that was based on tradition. Since new ideas were probably not encouraged, it is possible that beneath the surface there was unrest, but in the eyes of the kings, life in Persia represented the best of all possible worlds. The dynasty was firmly established, the empire conquered. Through his life a king would live in state at Persepolis or at the summer palace at Hamadan. And after he died he would be placed in what seemed an inaccessible tomb high in the Mountain of Mercy or in the cliff at Naqsheh Rostam, and there he would remain undisturbed

forever. In this atmosphere the arts could and did flourish just as they did in Renaissance Italy and seventeenth-century England, and the friezes and bas-reliefs of the palaces of Persepolis give testimony of that art.

Somewhere at Persepolis, carved in Arabic on one of the stone walls and signed by Ali, son of Sultan Khaled, is this inscription:

“Where are now the kings who reigned here and have taken the cup of death? How many cities, built in the morning, fell before evening came?”

The irony of this remark is too obvious for comment, yet somehow it is a suitable epigraph for Persepolis. The palaces now lie in ruins; the graves of the great kings have been looted and the bodies stolen and destroyed. In a word, no civilization that fails to move forward can survive, since to remain static is to move backwards. The empire of the Achaemenians started to decline at the death of Darius, even before Persepolis was completed.

All of these sad facts are clear and obvious, and the collapse of the empire into the hands of Alexander could have been foretold decades before the actual event, even as the fall of present-day Western empires seems inevitable. But what is touching about Persepolis is the degree to which it seems a symbol of the history of all the world. Great dynasties and empires have come and gone. Certainly they brought evil things with them, since they were human institutions, yet they also brought much that was good and beautiful. It is doubtful, for example, that the citizens of the great Achaemenian empire were any less contented with their lot than the citizens of the most “progressive” of today’s democracies, and what is more, they produced an art at Persepolis that still amazes the world. Therefore the Arabic inscription which seems so apt for Persepolis is perhaps somewhat trite. To be sure, all human endeavor that has human grandeur and magnificence as its end will finally come to nothing; that is obvious. But it is not pleasant to face the probability that human endeavor which has higher aims, and which at the same time produces art of a high standard, will come to the same end.

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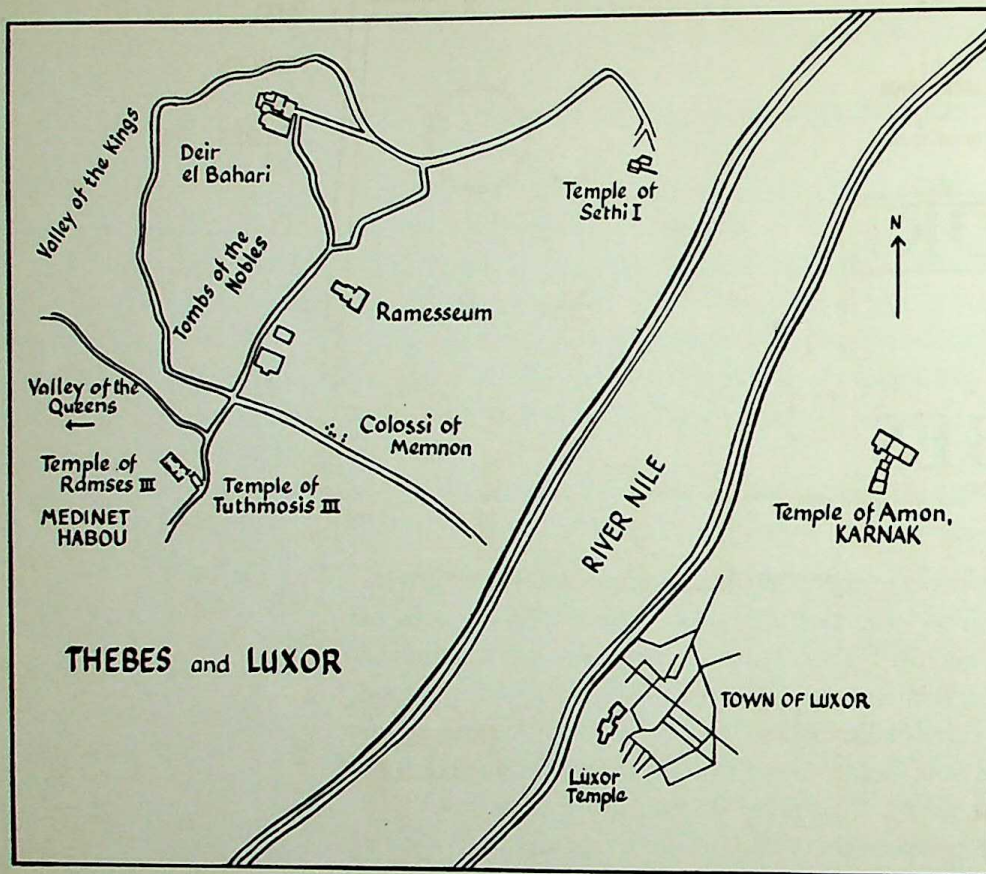
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IN EGYPT one learns to expect gigantic monuments. The great pyramid of Cheops, for example, is so large that it could contain within its walls the cathedrals of Florence, Milan, and St. Peter's, Rome, not to mention Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's, London. If such a statement can be made of only one pyramid, what can be said of the great ruins of Luxor and Thebes located 500 miles up the Nile from Cairo? Perhaps it is best simply to say that the temple of Karnak is the largest temple ever built in the world. That there are four other gigantic temples, in addition to the hundreds of tombs in the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens, and that they are all over 3,000 years old—that is to say, five times as old as Angkor and the Konarak-Bhubaneswar temples in India—indicates the astonishing magnitude of the achievements of the ancient Egyptians.

By rights, then, one would expect the ruins of Luxor and Thebes to constitute the most magnificent sight in the world, next only, perhaps, to the pyramids at Gizeh. Yet the fact is they are not. Athens and Rome both have more admirers, and the Buddhist temples of Siam and Burma are far more interesting. The reason for the relative dullness of these Egyptian antiquities is not their state of preservation, for they are in a much better condition than are most of the world's ruins, including the Acropolis and Persepolis. Nor is it caused by a lack of things to see, for it takes two full days even superficially to examine the site. Rather, the dissatisfaction one feels with these Egyptian monuments seems to come from something in the character of the buildings themselves.

Individually the temples are not difficult to understand, nor are the burial cus-



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FIGURE 18. Map of Thebes and Luxor.

toms especially bewildering, for so much evidence is provided that it is possible to piece together the essential elements of ancient Egyptian life. Indeed, the religion of the New Empire, when Thebes was the Egyptian capital, is so familiar that certain parallels have even been drawn with stories from the Old and New Testaments. Osiris, the fertility god, who was the son of Gheb and Nout (the Egyptian prototypes of Adam and Eve), was murdered by his brother, Seth, and cut up into little pieces. The wife of Osiris, who was called Isis and who later played a role in Egyptian mythology not unlike that of the Virgin Mary in Christianity, collected the pieces and magically revived her husband. Horus, their son, then vowed to take vengeance on Seth and thus became the third member of the Egyptian trinity. In

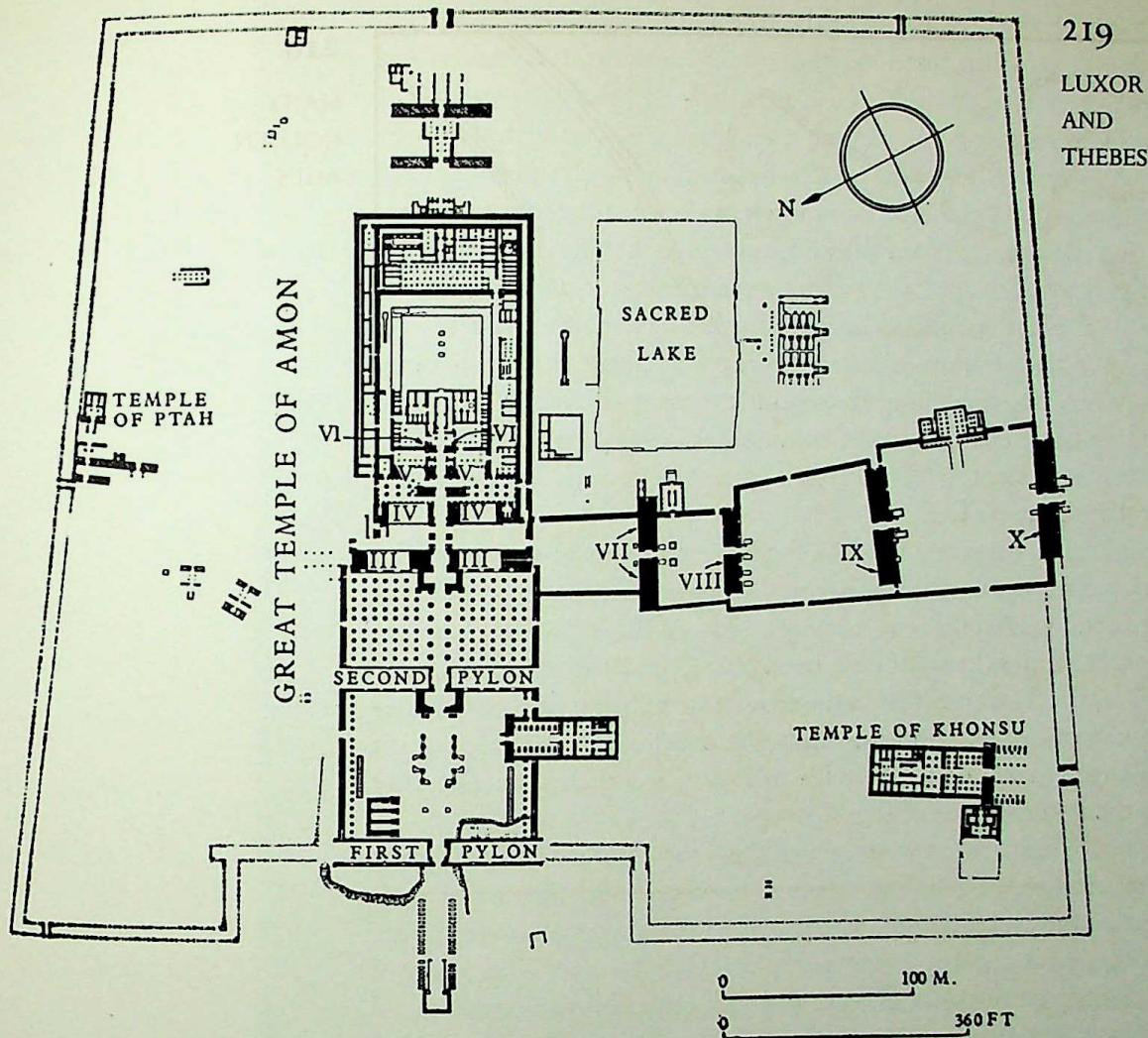


FIGURE 19. Plan of Temple of Amon, Karnak. (Courtesy of the Oriental Institute, Chicago, and of Penguin Books Ltd.)

the spring of each year the death and resurrection of Osiris was celebrated at the Luxor Temple very much as Christians celebrate Easter.

Yet despite these similarities and the evidence of archaeology which make the life of the ancient Egyptians intelligible, there is something missing at Luxor and Thebes. Even at the gigantic temple of Karnak, one senses this lack.

This temple is approached by a long avenue lined on either side by rows of

huge stone rams. Through the high portal at the far end of this avenue, one passes into the first courtyard, which is lined on either side by columns and contains two temples built by later Pharaohs, Sethi II and Ramses III, and also large statues of these divine kings. Continuing on through another huge gateway or pylon, one comes into a vast columned hall, enclosed on all sides by a high wall and containing 134 pillars. Yet another massive pylon and one enters an open area containing obelisks and rows of massive statues. From then on, no fewer than nine more courtyards, pillared hallways, and walled sanctuaries stretch towards the southeastern entrance, giving a total length of more than 500 yards to the temple as a whole. From the center of the temple four additional courtyards also extend 300 yards laterally to form a wing. In everything, the gigantic is stressed. The first court is 112 yards wide and almost 90 deep, and the columned hall is almost as large. The walls of the massive pylons are 100 feet high and 50 feet thick at the base, and the columns of the hypostyle are 75 feet tall.

One could go on quoting figures, but like the huge numbers in war casualties and catastrophes, they soon become meaningless. Certainly to be mentioned, however, are the gigantic statues and the wall carvings. Most of the statues, the smallest of which is at least three times the size of a human being, are badly damaged, only those of Ramses III and of Tuthmosis III in the temple wing being fully recognizable. They are always in one of two positions, either standing with the left leg thrust forward and with arms crossed or seated with their arms on their laps. The only variation between the statues is one of size.

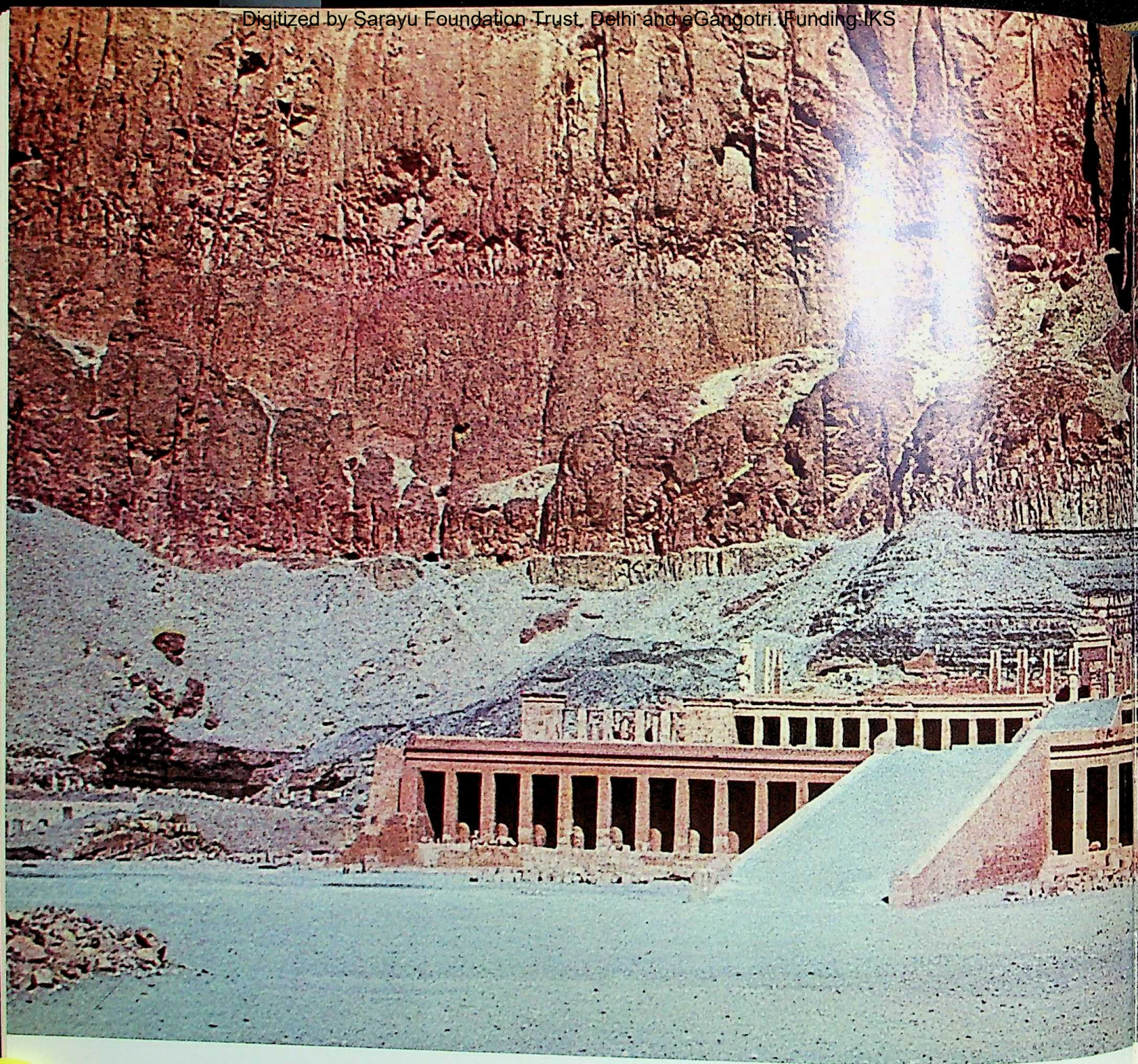
The relief drawings which are cut into the walls and the columns also tend to be repetitive. They are similar for religious reasons, however, and because of their function within the architectural design. According to ancient Egyptian tradition, once a site for a temple was chosen, it was never changed. The inner sanctuary of the god was built directly on the place chosen, and then around it were constructed courtyards and columned hallways. The carvings on the inner walls and on those nearest to the holy spot always show the king bringing offerings to Osiris. These pictures are stylized, and Osiris always stands in the same position while the Pharaoh opposite him varies only in his choice of headgear, depending upon whether he is wearing the crown of Upper or Lower Egypt. Other much-repeated portraits on the inner walls show the king and the god or Isis and Osiris standing hand in hand. On the outer walls more lively and varied scenes are inscribed, although they have war as a common subject and commemorate the various victories won by the Pharaohs of Egypt over their enemies. These scenes are full

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PLATE 98. *Columns of Temple
of Ramses III, Medinet Ha-
bou, Thebes.*





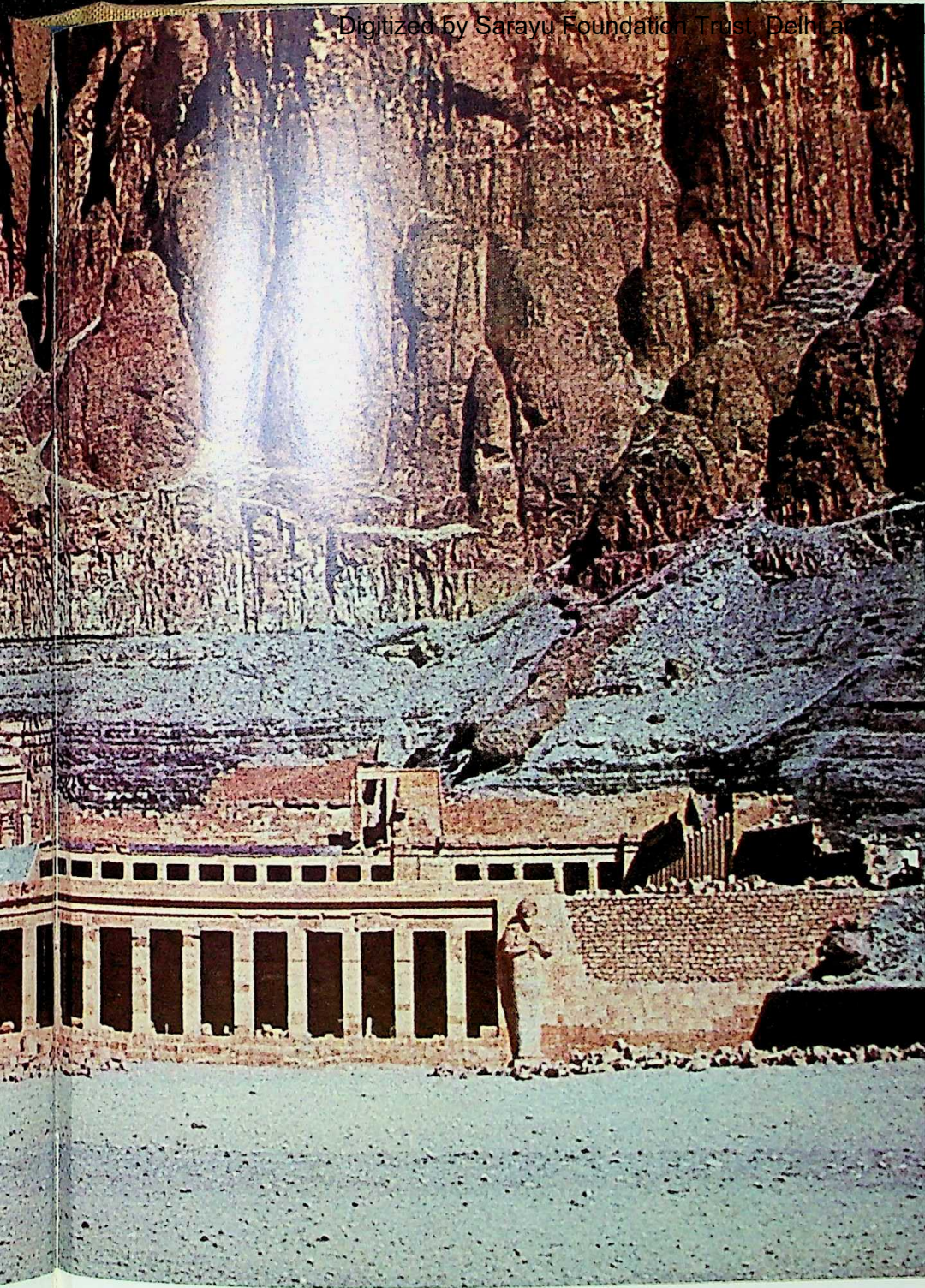


PLATE 99. *Temple of Hatshepsut, Deir el-Bahari, Thebes.*

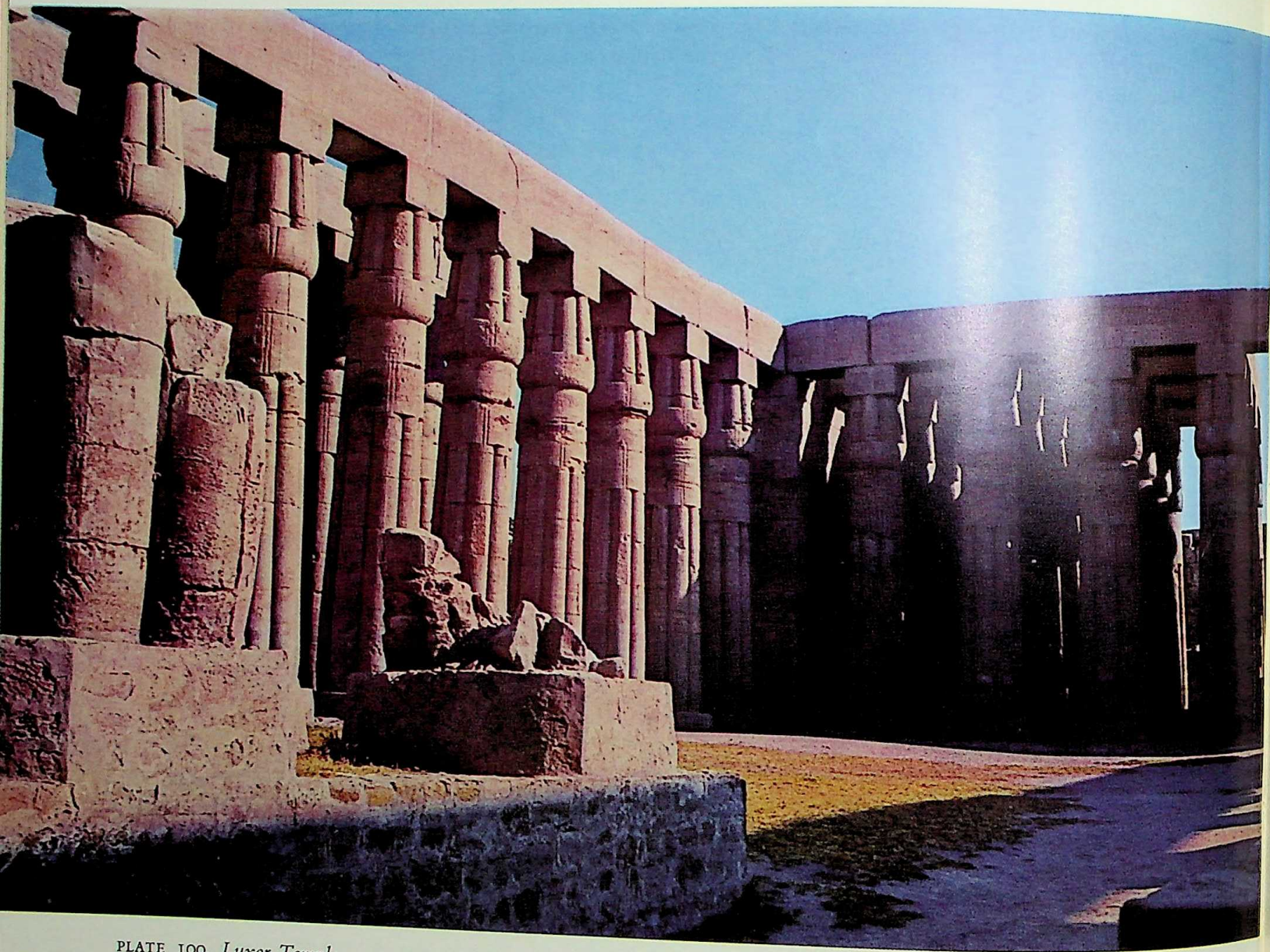


PLATE 100. *Luxor Temple.*

of action and show armed men on horses and chariots engaged in battle. Here the normally conservative art of the ancient Egyptians with its series of static profiles becomes more experimental and lively.

As Pharaoh succeeded Pharaoh, those who felt inclined to build added on to the original temple instead of building new ones. Thus, as new courtyards, pylons, and chapels were constructed around the old sanctuary, the temple of Karnak grew to enormous proportions. In order to control the design of the expansion, the traditional scheme of carving, as indicated above, was imposed on each addition, even though no less than eight Pharaohs, from Tuthmosis I (1550-1520 B.C.) to Ramses III (1198-1166 B.C.), were involved in the construction of the temple.

Enough perhaps has been said of the different aspects of this temple. Many of its individual aspects are interesting and pleasing, but considered as a whole it somehow seems an uneven performance. What is missing is a general aesthetic attraction, and the reason for this deficiency is the conservatism of the designs, a fault that is all the more noticeable because of the gigantic size of the building. It would seem that the artists and sculptors commissioned to embellish the temple lacked imagination or inspiration. Their subject matter is drawn almost entirely from outside of nature, and their style is controlled by tradition. Thus sculptural and painting techniques did not change at all from the Old Empire of 3000 B.C. to the New Empire almost two thousand years later. Only when they were given a relatively free hand, as in the battle scenes, or when they copied from nature, as in the papyrus and lotus capitals of the columns, did the Egyptian artists approach liveliness and beauty. As for the rest, the temples of Luxor and Thebes, like the pyramids of Gizeh, seem remarkable only for the engineering skill that was required for their construction.

Despite what has been said, these temples are not without interest. The Luxor Temple itself, built by Amenophis III and Ramses II, stands on the edge of the Nile directly across the river from the road that leads to the twin Colossi of Memnon, which serve as a gateway to the sites at Thebes. The Luxor Temple was used as a new year temple and as a resting place for the god Amon on his way to the Karnak Temple. Though smaller than Karnak, it is nonetheless almost 300 yards long. Its smaller size, however, helps to make it comprehensible: it consists of two large open courtyards connected by a long pillared causeway, with a complex of chapels and sanctuaries adjoining the southernmost of the courtyards. Unfortunately there is an unsightly mosque which Moslems of a later century built in the middle of the northern courtyard, but even so, the temple is

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a homogeneous unit because of the rows of standing brown stone columns which run its whole length. The usual patterns of decoration are repeated here with papyrus-leaf capitals and incised reliefs on the walls and columns.

Across the river on the wide dusty plain there are three more major temples, of which the Ramesseum, especially built by Ramses II as his own funeral temple, is similar to the temples in Luxor. It contains, however, the remains of a statue so colossal that the head alone is seven feet wide. It has been calculated that the height of the original statue exceeded 50 feet. The other temples, however, are more interesting. The first of these is the temple of Deir el-Bahari, built by the extraordinary Queen Hatshepsut, who once ruled all of Egypt alone and who, more than anyone else except Tuthmosis III, her successor and the execrator of her memory, brought about the greatness of the New Empire of Egypt during the Eighteenth Dynasty. Quite unlike any other temple at Thebes, the Deir el-Bahari is built on three successive terraces which are supported by long columned galleries and connected by long ramps. Although it is impressive when seen from a distance against the gaunt cliffs that rise above it, the Deir el-Bahari is not, upon close inspection, a building of much architectural interest. The ground plan is too extensive and spacious for the buildings and the columns built on it, with the result that they seem relatively diminished in size and unfortunately insignificant.

In some ways the most interesting of all the temples at Thebes, the temples of Ramses III and Tuthmosis III at the Medinet Habou are nevertheless artistically the least beautiful. The large temple of Ramses III is the last great temple built at the site, and in the comparative crudeness of the design and execution one can detect the degeneration that set in towards the end of the New Empire just before the capital was moved from Thebes. Yet its size and state of preservation make it a valuable example of Egyptian art. Although enormous by any other standard, the temple of Ramses III seems manageable and relatively compact compared to the others at Luxor. In addition, the walls, the columns, and even sections of the roof that covered the galleries remain intact, and there are traces of the colors with which the whole building must originally have been painted. The entrance to the temple is reached by passing through the royal pavilion of Ramses III, which stands next to the charming smaller temple of Tuthmosis. This pavilion is unique in Egyptian architecture because it is a three-storied building, and from its interior doorway there is a dramatic view of the great temple beyond, guarded by the immense 200-foot-long outer wall or pylon. For some reason, later generations of Moslems did not despoil this temple as they did others at Thebes, and therefore it remains very much as it was originally. Its most pleasing aspect is its unity—partly the result of

its having been built by one Pharaoh only. The temple consists of two courtyards lined with columns and divided by a high pylon. Since these courtyards are small, the largest being about 40 yards square, the columns and walls appear to be relatively large, and, more than in any other of the Theban temples, one feels a sense of mystery and grandeur. Even though the buildings of the sanctuary are almost entirely destroyed, as a complex of temples the Medinet Habou has no equal in Egypt.

All of these Theban temples are funeral temples, and they represent the approach to funeral rites that was adopted in the Middle and New Empires. In the early empire, the great Pharaohs of the Fourth Dynasty also built funerary temples, but these buildings were always dwarfed by the immense pyramids that were built to encase the royal mummies. The later generations reversed the procedure, however, and adopted a more modest scale. They either made use of the funeral temples already in existence or added on to one of them a kind of memorial wing and were satisfied with a relatively small cave tomb dug into the side of the mountain. Why the Egyptians stopped building pyramids has never been adequately explained. Economy was probably not the reason, since nothing so trivial was ever permitted to interfere with the immensely important funeral rite and the supposed assurance of a hereafter in keeping with the dignity of the divine kings. Nevertheless, the new method was certainly more practical and to our eyes more pleasing because it agrees with our at least publicly expressed ideas of what is fit and proper, namely that God is first and man second. The new system doubtless pleased the powerful priesthood as well, and their influence is visible in the extreme conservatism of temple architecture.

The tombs of the later kings and queens and members of the royal entourage however, show a good deal of individuality, and it is thanks to the frescoes painted on their walls and the extraordinary discoveries in Tutankhamen's tomb that so much is known about the lives of the ancient Egyptians. These cave tombs, normally found in groups as in the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens, which lie in the bleak hills above Thebes, vary in architectural design, though of course all possess the common feature of a tunnel which leads to one or more underground chambers. Most consist of several chambers carved out of solid rock and supported by large square pillars. In general they are chambers of little architectural interest, but their walls are usually covered with paintings, many of which are richly colored and finely drawn.

Many of the same motifs that are found in the temples are repeated here, especially the depiction of the dead person standing with one or more of the presiding

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gods. But it is in the scenes of day-to-day life that the tomb painters really excel. Much of the wall space is given over to the so-called Books of the Dead, and in addition to the portrayal of his judgment, many events of the dead man's life are illustrated, as well as the final event of his burial. The figures of human beings are all painted in profile, but this stilted pose does not remove all reality from them. As in the caves of Ajanta, their homely occupations—farming, sewing, cooking—give them life. Natural and mythological beasts also appear frequently in the wall paintings, but their purpose is largely decorative; they do not take part in scenes of action with human figures. The most fully reproduced scene of all is that of the actual burial of the person, in which the sarcophagus is shown being pulled along the narrow corridors to its final resting place.

For the finest of the wall paintings, the designs were first sketched on the limestone wall, after which a stonemason outlined the drawings with his chisel, converting them into a low bas-relief. Afterwards they were painted. Many tombs, however, show signs of haste or possibly of an exhaustion of funds, and in certain of them only the first sketch has been completed.

Generally the roofs of the caves were also painted but not with human figures. The most common design was that of gold stars on a dark blue sky, but the more elaborate royal tombs, for example that of Ramses VI, with its burnished gold paintings of astronomical figures, use a wider variety of designs. One of the most charming of all is that found in the tomb of the royal scribe Sennufer, the roof of which is painted to resemble an arbor of grapes.

The sarcophagi themselves are generally huge pieces of granite in which a space has been hollowed out for the mummy case. Certainly the most elaborate of these is that of Tutankhamen. The third golden mummy case remains *in situ* in the Valley of the Kings and contains the body, but Carter, who discovered the remains, removed all of the other contents of the tomb to the Cairo Museum. The various mummy cases, all together seven in number, are of solid gold covered with designs etched into the surface and decorated with lapis lazuli and other jeweled stones. These and the gold and jeweled bands that were wrapped round the mummy are of course the most spectacular and valuable of the treasures found in Tutankhamen's tomb, but they are only a small portion of the total number.

As they are now placed in cases along a corridor of the Cairo Museum, all neatly marked and catalogued, they are less exciting to see than they must originally have been when they were discovered in the tomb. Yet only the most jaded could fail to be amazed at the gold and ivory caskets containing fine linens, the alabaster jars full of scented waters, the statuettes in gold of the ancient gods, the gold-

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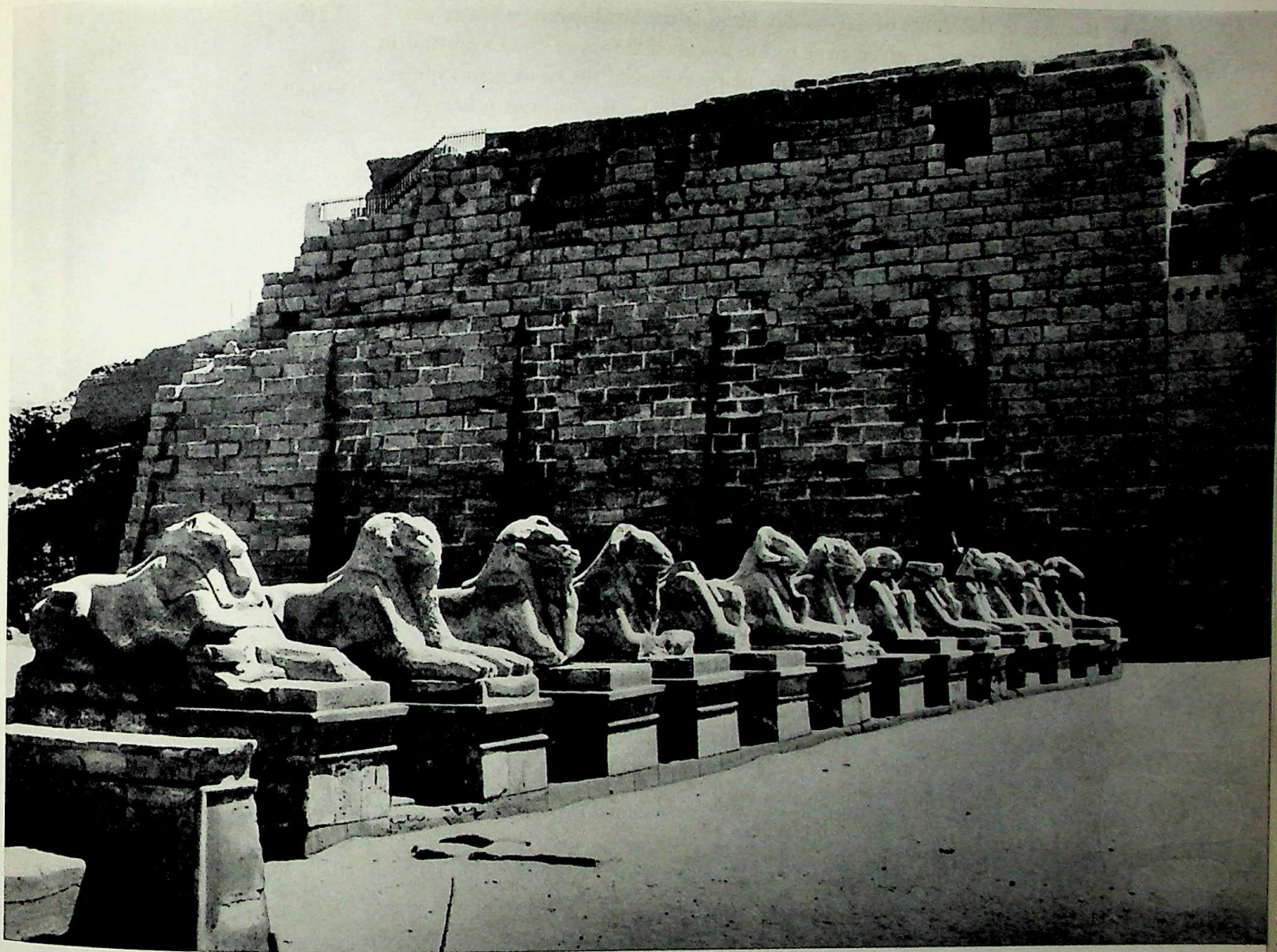


PLATE IOI. *Row of carved rams and first pylon, Temple of Amon, Karnak.
(Courtesy of the United Arab Republic Tourist Office, New York)*



PLATE 102. *Wall carving,
Temple of Amon, Karnak.*

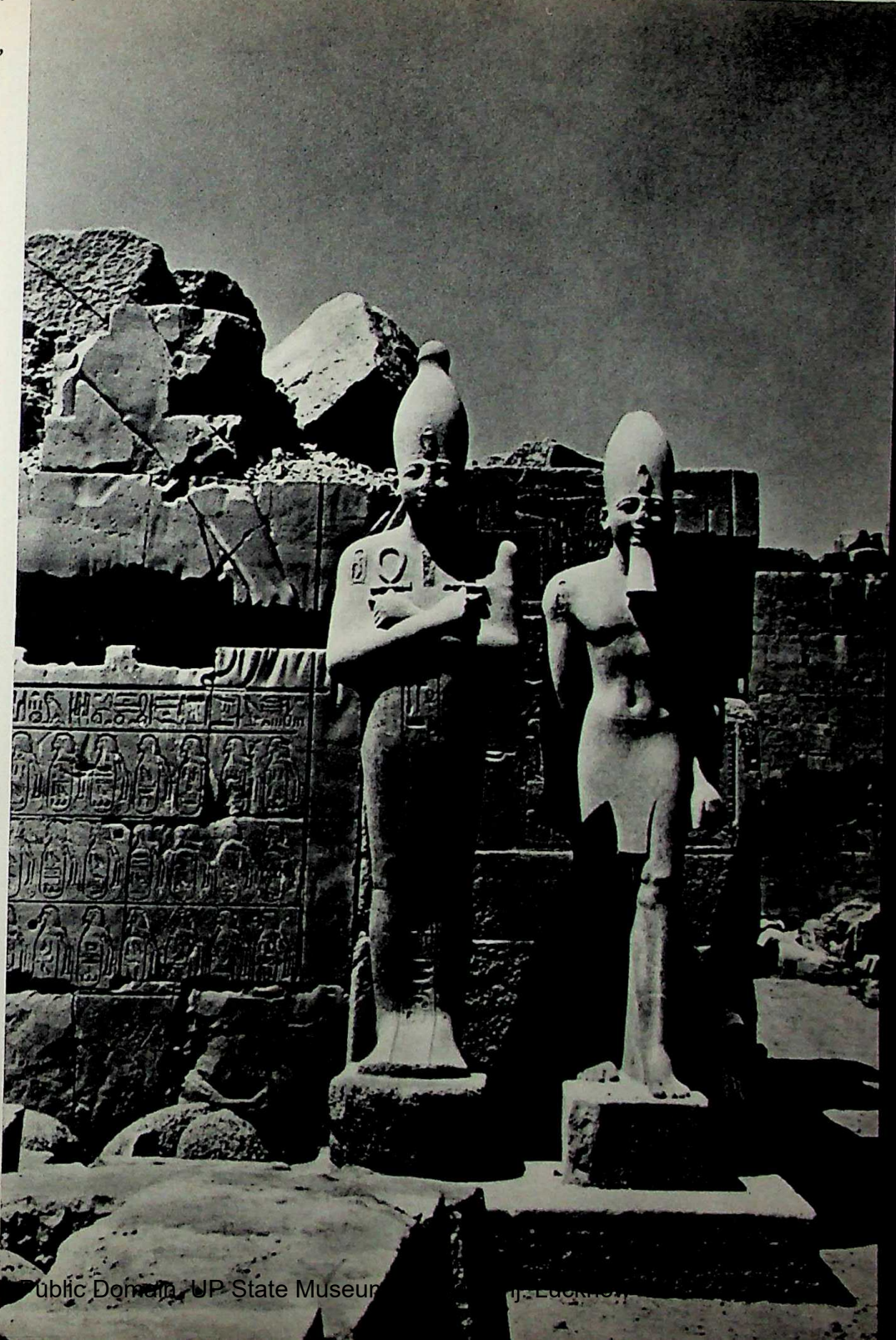


PLATE 103. *Statues of Ram-
ses III in first courtyard,
Temple of Amon, Karnak.*

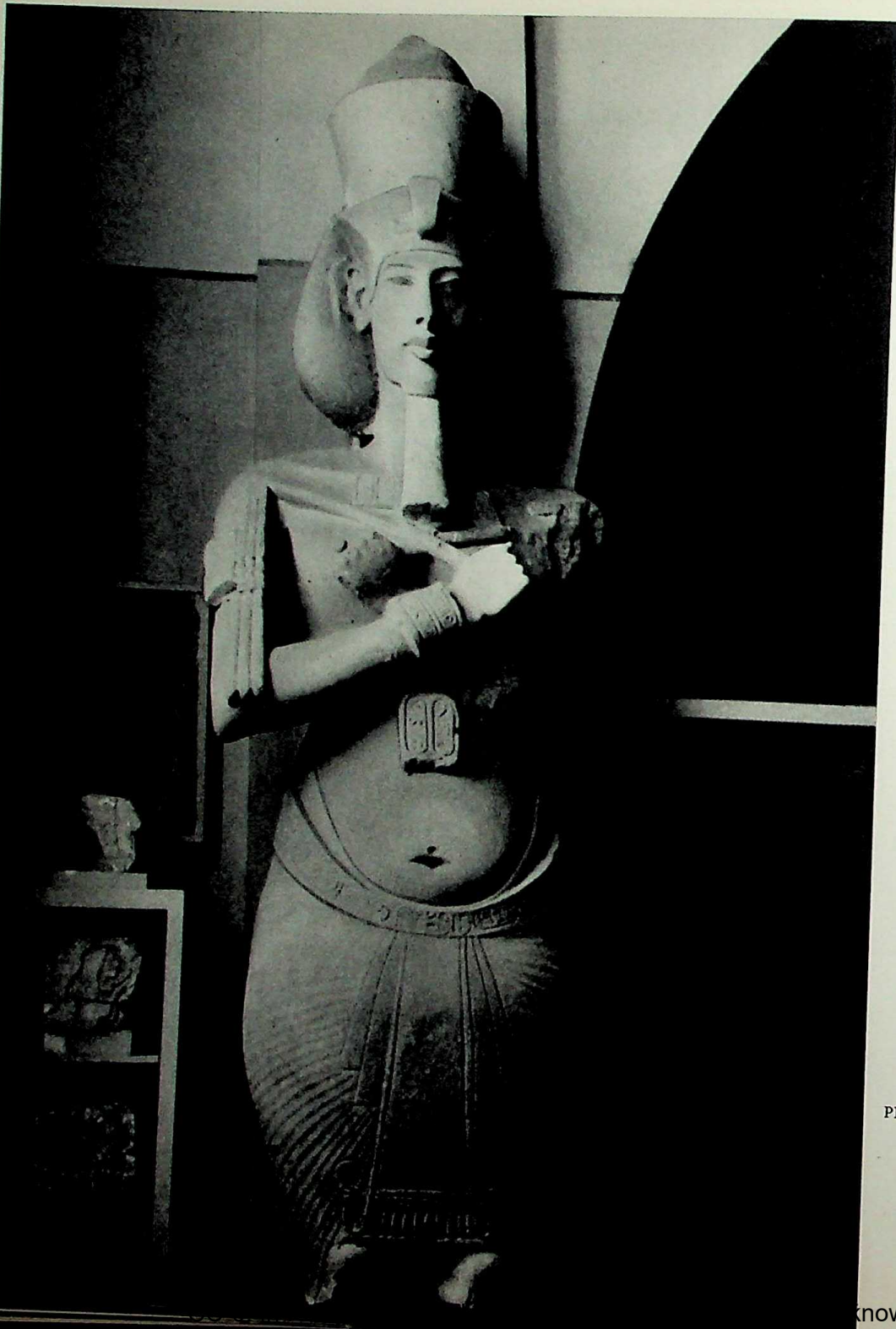


PLATE 104. *Statue of Akhenaten, Cairo Museum. (Courtesy of the United Arab Republic Tourist Office, New York)*

PLATE 105. Mask of Tout-ankh-Amon, Cairo Museum. (Photo by Lehnert and Landrock, Cairo)



PLATE 106. Ceiling mural, grape arbor, Tomb of Sennufer, Thebes. (Photo by Lehnert and Landrock, Cairo)

PLATE 107. *Three-
storied pavilion of
Ramses III, Medinet
Habou, Thebes.*



PLATE 108. *View of
the main hypostyle,
Temple of Amon,
Karnak.*



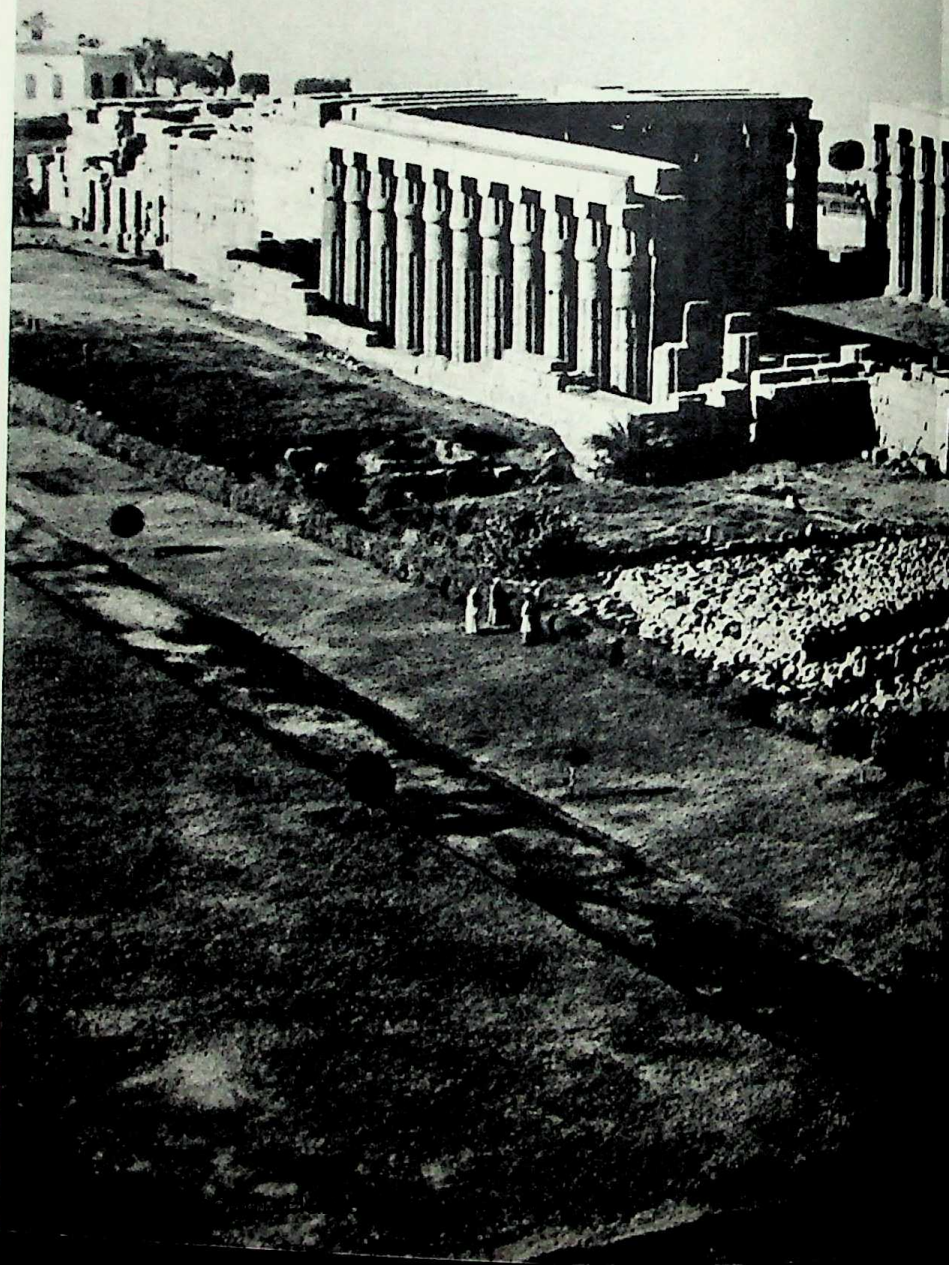
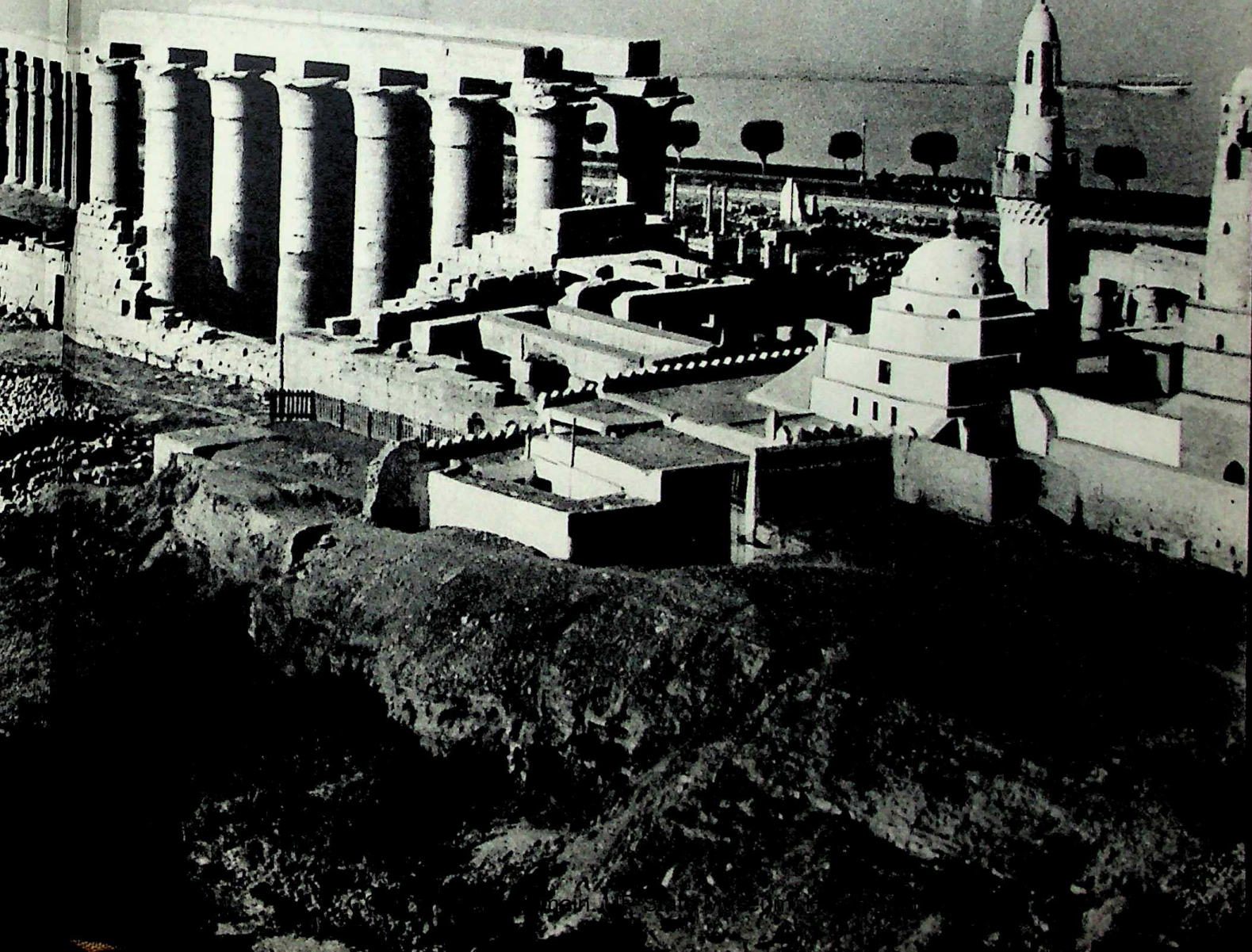


PLATE 109. *General view of Luxor Temple.*
(Courtesy of the United Arab Republic Tourist
Office, New York)





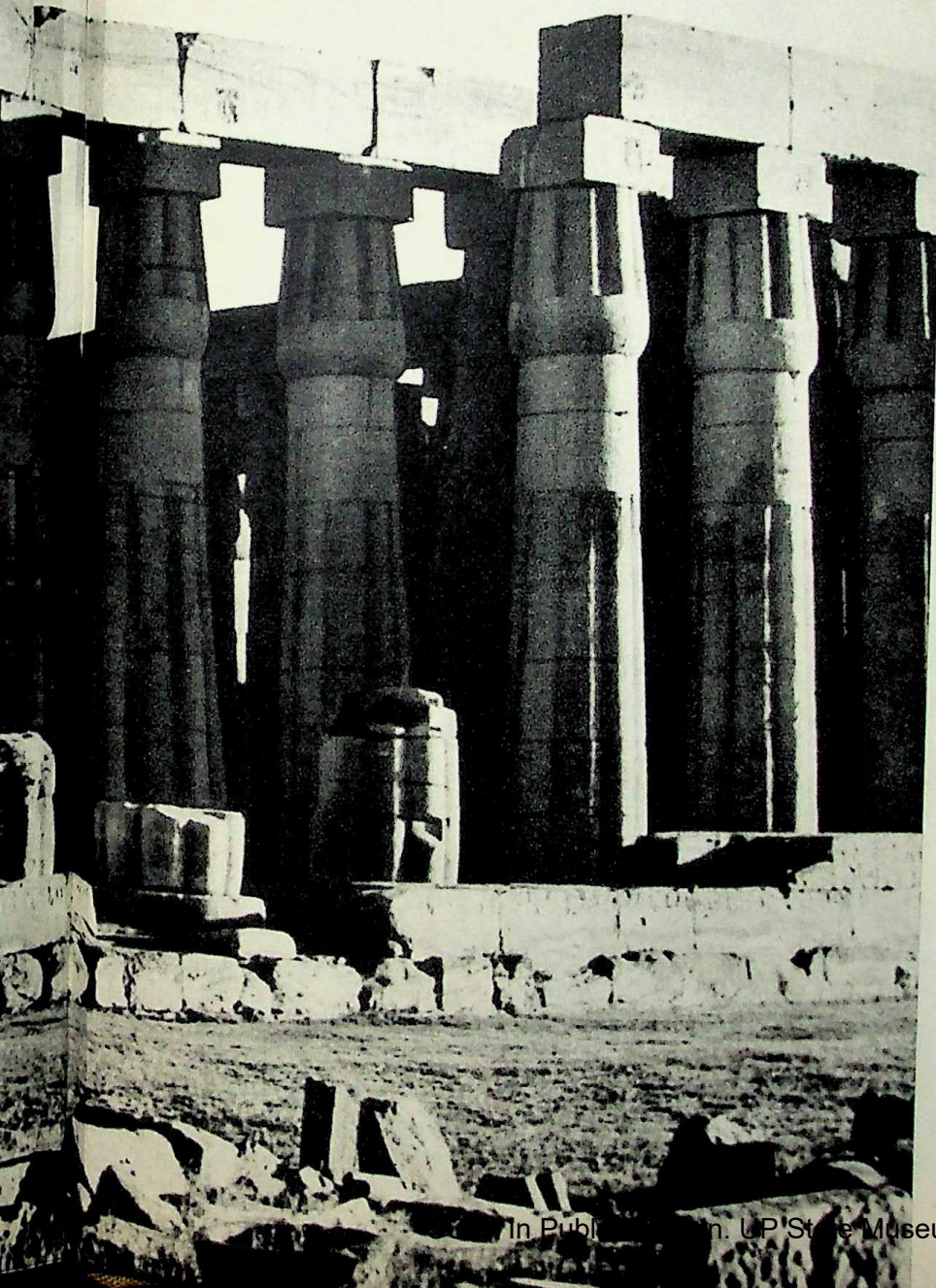


PLATE 110. *Luxor Temple.* (Courtesy of the United Arab Republic Tourist Office, New York)

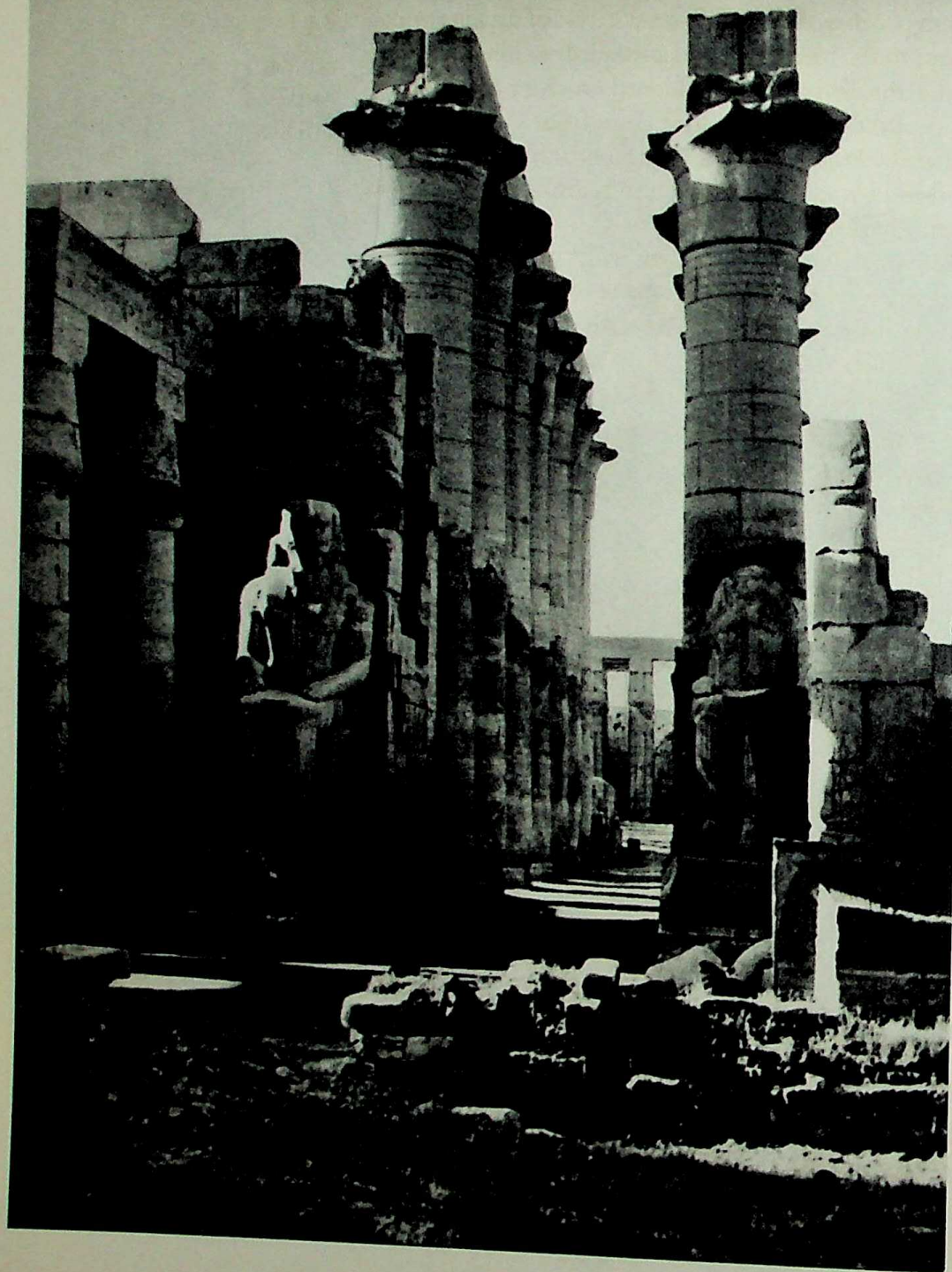


PLATE III. *Luxor Temple.* (Courtesy of the United Arab Republic Tourist Office, New York)

embossed thrones and beds and couches, the two life-sized statues of the king which originally guarded the entrance to the tomb, the golden-headed walking sticks, the full-sized golden chariots, and the marvelously fashioned crockery and pottery. This catalogue of riches sounds as though it might have come from an Arabian tale, but the astonishing thing is that all of these treasures were found in an almost perfect condition, and that every other Pharaoh, and the nobles according to their rank, must have had similar treasures buried with them.

In the workmanship of these small items, one finds an imaginativeness that helps to counteract the sameness of many of the great monuments of Egyptian art. The folded eagles' wings etched on the golden mummy cases, for example, are beautifully designed and curiously similar to the art of Aubrey Beardsley. The golden heads of walking sticks and the handles of boxes containing jewels also show signs of a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic taste.

With so much evidence available, one is tempted to draw conclusions and to compare Egyptian art with that of other civilizations, such as the Roman. Yet one must be wary, for the immense duration of ancient Egyptian history can easily make these comparisons unreliable. It is possible, I think, to consider with some accuracy the causes of the rise and fall of the Achaemenian empire, but when one remembers that the dynasty of Cambyses was merely one of thirty recorded historical dynasties in Egypt, not even including the Ptolemies or any of the later rulers from Byzantium or the Mussulman empire, one needs courage to make judgments about Egypt and its art. Indeed, if nothing else, the sight of Egyptian ruins increases one's sense of perspective. All ruins are useful in this way, but one must go to Egypt in order fully to sense the vast extent of human history.

Still, an attempt must be made to solve the enigma of an art that is massive, conservative, and astonishingly enduring, yet strangely without aesthetic grace. As has been noted, the Egyptians did not look to life or to nature for inspiration; their models are stylized types passed down by earlier generations, and their buildings are remote and otherworldly. Only the capitals of columns carved with lotus and papyrus leaves reflect real life. The frescoes of the tombs are more interesting as historical records of the daily activities of the Egyptians than as works of art, and only in the work of the goldsmith and the wood carver is there much imagination and variety.

One reason for the stiffness and "deadness" of ancient Egyptian art may be found in the social scheme of the country, since it was a monolithic state in which the divine Pharaoh was everything and the people nothing. One could say, then, that Egyptian art is dead because Egyptian artists were slaves and that, from the Western

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point of view at least, slaves cannot create a free art. Unfortunately, however, such an answer is not wholly adequate, since although by present-day standards the ancient Egyptians may seem to have been slaves, by the standards then prevailing, their life was not particularly repressed. They were living under a system that had endured for centuries, and it is unlikely that there was much rebellion against it or that they considered themselves enslaved.

Far from being inspired by a bullwhip, the Egyptians seem to have been inspired by religious beliefs. To them, the Pharaoh was a god, or at least would become one when he died. Therefore in building temples and tombs they were performing a religious act. The problem that now arises is why this religious inspiration, which in other places produced such magnificent works of art as Chartres, the Parthenon, the Shwedagon, and the Kailasa Temple at Ellora, should have produced in Egypt an art that is merely impressive without being beautiful.

There is nothing in the general beliefs of the Egyptian religion that would seem of necessity to have discouraged creativity, since their polytheistic system was not unlike that of many later religions. A clue may, however, be found in the curious rule of Akhnaten, the so-called Heretic King, husband of the famous Nefretite. There is still considerable speculation as to whether Akhnaten's disavowal of the gods of his forefathers was a political or a spiritual act, but what is certain is that the replacement of the whole pantheon of gods subservient to Amon, including Osiris, Isis, and Horus, by one all-powerful god, Aten, brought about an entirely new artistic spirit. Aten was considered not as a fearful or punishing god, but as the god of creativity who controlled every aspect of men's lives.

How manifold are thy works!

They are hidden from the face of men, O sole god,
Like to whom there is none other.

So sang the Pharaoh Akhnaten. By popularizing this one benevolent deity, whose rites were joyful rather than fearful, and by removing from the ranks of the gods all of the dead Pharaohs, Akhnaten let loose a burst of creativity and brought about a humanization of the arts. Akhnaten himself insisted that the traditional methods of wall painting and relief work be replaced by the use of models from nature, and he refused to allow statues of himself to be sculptured in an idealized manner. The result may be seen in the Cairo Museum, where there are several grotesquely real statues of this king with his wide, almost feminine hips, fat stomach, long stringy neck, and low-slung jaw. For the brief period of Akhnaten's reign, the arts in Egypt underwent a revolution more violent than any experienced before or after.

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But one lifetime was not sufficiently long to change an ancient tradition, and when his successor Tutankhamen reverted to the older theology of his grandfathers, the arts reverted to the old system as well. Akhnaten had been a great experimenter, but with no one to carry on the new art, the changes he made were soon forgotten, and the long conservative tradition, which was encouraged by the priesthood, was reasserted.

There is insufficient evidence and far too much controversy about the reign of Akhnaten and Nefretite to be certain of the facts. Yet these short years are in such violent contrast to the long dynasties that preceded and followed them that some inferences may be hazarded about the "system" that prevailed over those centuries.

When Sir Mortimer Wheeler saw Mohenjodaro, the prehistoric brick city in Pakistan, he remarked that the society that lived there must have been subdued and controlled. Everything was organized, all the streets were straight, the houses were the same, and there was hardly any art. He presumed that Mohenjodaro, like Harappa, was a monolithic state in which the control exercised over the populace was so complete that the people, knowing nothing different, lived soulless lives lacking in beauty or imagination. To a lesser extent, to the extent, say, that Salazar is less of a despot than Hitler was, the Pharaohs of Egypt seem to have created a similar society. Akhnaten presumably saw the weaknesses of this system in which the priesthood used fear as a weapon against thought and imagination, but his revolution was short-lived.

Yet it would be foolish to blame the priests for everything. More important, probably, was the emphasis on death that one finds in the ancient religion. To this day it is of course next to its opposite number, birth, the one great mystery of life. From what is known of the ancient Egyptians and their skills, they had solved almost all of the problems of life with this great exception; it alone remained as that fearful event that might undo their system and all that they had accomplished in their years on earth. It was, in a word, the one thing they were afraid of. It would seem, therefore, that the theology they developed tried to incorporate death into its system, a task that is of course a part of all religions. Adopting a philosophy that has its more vulgar modern counterparts in the Brookwood necropolis and the Forest Lawn cemetery, they decided to take no chances with the hereafter. They didn't *know* what happened to the body after death, but to be on the safe side, they decided to make sure it was well preserved and that it lacked nothing it might need. They also wanted a feeling of security and permanent peace after death. Therefore they were content to live generally simple lives on earth so long as in the great void of death they had everything they might require. This seems to be

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the reason for the extraordinary size of their tombs, the like of which have never been built elsewhere, even in Moghul India.

Death also seems to be responsible for the conservative and traditional design of their temples and tombs. Men are always ready to experiment in small things: they will adopt new means of transport, they will follow fashions in dress, and they are not averse to living in new and different kinds of houses. But in what they consider to be really important—birth, marriage, and death, all of which embody mystery and evoke fear—they are much more careful. For this reason husbands want the best doctors when their wives are about to give birth to children; for this reason marriage ceremonies, with all their elaborate ritual, have changed little through the ages; and for this reason undertakers are able to exact huge sums of money from next of kin who are afraid that if they don't see to it that their dead relation is buried with all the traditional ceremony (and at great expense), something may go wrong and they may be forever cursed. Thus their obsessive fear of death caused the Egyptians to concentrate all of their artistic energies on tombs and funeral temples, and their fear of the unknown made them follow designs that were conservative and safe.

With the exception of the tombs of the Moghuls, one finds the same conservatism in other funeral monuments of the world. One need only look at the Tomb of Napoleon or the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington, at the tombs of the popes in St. Peter's, or any suburban graveyard to realize that an art inspired by death is inferior to one inspired by life. Or to put it in a different way, an art that receives its inspiration from any one overemphasized aspect of life, whether it be commercial gain, frivolity, anger, or death, never gives the aesthetic pleasure that an art gives which is inspired by a more balanced view of life. The Greek motto of *meden agan*—nothing to excess—seems to provide the key to aesthetic pleasure, and it is a motto for which the Egyptians were psychologically unprepared.

Of course Egypt is perhaps more conscious of death than other countries are. There is little of the joy and fullness of life that one finds in the atmosphere of other Mediterranean countries. This deficiency is partly caused by Egypt's geography. Surrounded by fearful deserts, the Egyptians are forced to cluster along the banks of the Nile in order to live. If the Nile were a sea or a lake, it might induce a calmer view of death, but the great Nile is always moving, and it probably provokes among the Egyptians a nervousness and an excessive consciousness of time (and of the inevitable end of their own time on earth). Egypt would therefore seem to be a country not so much of people but of inexorable forces.

Desert countries like Egypt and Iraq and Persia seem to produce a large pro-

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portion of the world's fanatics. It is not surprising that this should be so, but an art which reflects this single-mindedness, which is frightened and specialized, is not likely to be as universally satisfying as one which more calmly assesses life and takes as its model not just one aspect of life, but all of life.

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WHETHER one does so consciously or not, in time one develops a certain technique for looking at ruins. It is a necessary process, since otherwise one would never be able to come to any conclusions about what one has seen or to make comparisons with other ruins.

What is first necessary is to examine the methods used by the builders of a particular temple or monument. One need not be an architect, but in order to be able to discover a building's particular quality it is necessary to look at it critically and intelligently. One has to notice any special tricks that have been employed and any unusual features of the building. The next step is to compare the building to other buildings of the same type and to decide whether the building is a successful example of its type or, if it is not, how it falls short of the achievement of another. Naturally, if the building is the only one of its kind, like Borobudur, no such comparison is possible. It is possible, however, to consider whether or not it is successful in its purpose. In an interpretative analysis of this sort, one naturally has to be aware of any peculiar local influences by which the building may be distinguished.

The next step, which is a more difficult one, is to try and discover what inspired the building and what governed the manner in which it was built. To do this, the function of the building and its most obvious feature must be considered in hopes of finding a connection between those aspects of the building and the mentality of its designers. In this way, admittedly at the risk of being superficial, one comes to

think of such things as Hindu complexity, Moslem symmetry, Buddhist symbolism, and Egyptian conservatism.

Having "classified" a ruin or temple in this way, one can turn to a more important point: the extent to which the building is aesthetically pleasing.

The most noticeable feature of a work of art is its originality and daring. This quality is relative, however, and seems to depend principally upon the way in which natural forms have been handled. Nature should be present but should not be imitated in a slavish manner. The beauty of a building is determined to a certain extent by the way in which the architect has transformed nature and combined it with pure geometric form, like the rectangle, triangle, and circle. The architects of Borobudur, for example, dealt successfully with this problem, but those of Luxor and Thebes ignored nature and thus reduced the attractiveness of their work.

The appropriateness of a work of art to its functional purpose is also an essential part of its success. Aesthetically, a building can be pleasing even though it is ill-suited to its purpose or surroundings, but the knowledge of its inappropriateness will tend to lessen its general attractiveness. Even though it is a truism that architects should have a sense of proportion, the world is full of buildings which demonstrate that they have often been without this sense. It is appropriate for a palace or a temple to be magnificent—indeed they should have grandeur—but a country cottage or a burial place should not, which is one of the troubles with the Moghul tombs. In any event, while keeping within the bounds of good sense, an architect should concentrate on making his building somehow special. If he is trying for magnificence, for example, he should know the difference between organic magnificence and mere showiness.

Akin to these considerations is the necessity for an architect to be sure that what he is building fits in with the surroundings in which it is to be placed. He must be aware of the soil, the flora, and the terrain, and he must give attention to the surrounding open spaces and to the outbuildings. Furthermore, he should know something about the character of the people and country where the building is to be erected, so that he will know what is "fitting" and what is not. One of the world's more ludicrous examples of unsuitable architecture is found in Australia, where, around the outskirts of Sydney, rows and rows of dreary workmen's cottages, modeled on a pattern suitable for the cold climate of England, were built—each one stolidly facing *south*!

Carelessness has spoiled more than one building, and the twentieth century has a great deal to answer for with its modern buildings that look shabby in a few years'

time and with its lack of concern for permanence and general appearance. If he wishes his building to be a success, the supervising architect must be careful in his choice of material and in his decision whether to paint, tile, or carve the surfaces of his building. He must be sure that the detail work is consonant with the work as a whole, so that the building will not appear either excessively plain or excessively fussy. He must be able carefully to balance light and darkness and to see that the interior is appropriate to the exterior and vice versa. In a word, he must make sure that the artist's paintbrush, the sculptor's chisel, and the mason's hammer are being utilized not for special ends but for the building as a whole.

It may seem to many that what has just been written is obvious and that these statements are platitudes of which every architect is aware. Yet it is not difficult to supply examples of buildings that have been spoiled by the architect's ignorance of one or another of these points.

If architecture were merely a matter of following these principles, however, there would be no excuse for unsuccessful buildings. Indeed, one can think of buildings in which all of these rules were observed or in which, if one was ignored, the fault was made up by superlative performance elsewhere—the Taj Mahal, the Ramesseum at Thebes, and Polonnaruwa come to mind—but all of these are somehow unsatisfying. The point is, of course, that architecture is an art, not a mere science. What causes genius will probably never be known, but certainly one of the basic qualities of a beautiful and successful work of art is the inspiration behind its creation. As a general rule, to judge from the temples and monuments mentioned in earlier chapters, otherworldliness seems necessary in order that a feeling of dedication may be invoked. A building towards which all of the workmen have a feeling of devotion—in short, a belief in the necessity for the building and therefore a desire to do their part conscientiously—is the only sort that will probably be wholly beautiful. Other buildings frequently reveal the lower level of their inspiration by bits of fakery, by sloppy workmanship, or by a false sense of proportion.

What has so far been said here concerns the pleasure one receives in observing a beautiful work of art. It is perhaps more important, however, to find what lies behind this beauty, to discover whether the work of art has a symbolic importance and whether it reflects men's view of truth.

Having selected, then, either by the method suggested above or by one like it, a building that satisfies one's aesthetic standards, one begins to consider it as a representative of the people who built it. Thus buildings with dramatic settings, like Angkor Wat or the Taj Mahal, suggest an inclination towards drama on the part of the people themselves. More interesting, however, is the extent to which a build-

ing reflects the people's spiritual aspirations. One way of discovering this quality in a building is to compare it to a building of the same genre erected by another people. One learns, for example, a great deal about the difference between Hindus and Moslems merely by comparing temples with mosques. In addition, some buildings seem to stress a particular feature of human life. Persepolis, for example, causes one to think of splendor; the tombs of the Moghul emperors suggest vanity. Luxor and Thebes seem symbols of fear, while the Lotfollah Mosque and Borobudur are works of religious devotion. A consideration of the general ideas suggested by these buildings leads directly to history and an attempt to assess the peoples of the past and especially their spiritual life and religious beliefs.

Certain ruins therefore will suggest a particular quality, but all of them have a number in common. First of all, ruins give one a sense of proportion. Standing before Angkor, for example, one feels humble. But one also senses a certain fear because Angkor is such a *ruin*, because it went down so quickly before the jungle and was almost lost forever. In front of a pyramid that is 5,000 years old, on the other hand, one senses only the pettiness of the events of a mere decade. One learns of the impermanence of many of the occupations of mankind, and one also discovers the strange permanence of others. In short, one begins to realize the similarities of the hopes and loves of men everywhere: how, beneath the surface, men are everywhere very much alike.

Then, without forgetting the aesthetic attraction of a particular ruin, since the fact that it is a work of art is responsible for one's taking an interest in it in the first place, one can begin, after this long process, to form certain conclusions about men who erect temples and palaces and tombs. As to these conclusions, each person will probably draw his own, and those suggested in the previous paragraph and in earlier chapters will probably not appeal to everybody.

As to the aesthetic importance of ruins, there will probably be a similar divergence of opinion. It would seem, however, at least to people of Western orientation, that the great monuments of the East indicate two basic truths: that no artist can afford to forget that he is a human being and that, although he may build for God, his works must be comprehensible to men. The great mass of humanity must never be forgotten or replaced by mere mathematics. These ruins also suggest that the Greek maxim of "nothing to excess" is valid everywhere in the world. Finally, they seem to substantiate the view that no work of art inspired by man alone will ever be a great work of art, and that some otherworldly inspiration—normally it is religious—is essential.

To consider ruins as something apart, however, is not enough. One should re-

turn to one's own world and think about contemporary works of art which in their turn may become ruins. When one looks at the Western world one finds few ruined sites like those of the East. Only in Greece and Rome and in Mexico and Peru do comparable ruins exist, for the people of Europe and America have been relatively lucky and have not been forced by disaster to desert their cities as has almost everybody in the East.

The Westerner must build, therefore, not for himself but for others—and not merely for posterity either, since posterity can take care of itself—but with an inspiration that posterity will recognize just as we recognize the Lord Buddha's continued strength in the Ananda Temple. One is dealing here with the problem of the age, and the present age is on its last legs because it cannot find anything worth supporting, anything which can supply inspiration for its energies. As their ruins testify, other civilizations faced the same problem. They all went under, as the present one will go under, but in the meantime one might at least understand what in contemporary life will interest posterity in the same way that Pagan and Angkor and Anuradhapura are interesting to the present age. That is not so much a solace as an only hope.

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APPENDIX · TRAVEL GUIDE

WHILE *this is in no way a guidebook, it would be useful, I think, for anyone who is contemplating a visit to any of the places mentioned to have the benefit of the practical information I have collected in my wanderings regarding accommodation and means of travel. Below, then, listed under the names of the sites, are certain notes that I hope will be helpful. I have mentioned specific guidebooks for most of the places, but where relevant, Murray's Handbook for India, Pakistan, Burma, and Ceylon (John Murray, London) is the standard guide and is generally very useful, obviating the necessity of importunate (live) guides.*

AGRA, FATEHPUR SIKRI, AND JAIPUR (India). All of these places are easily visited since they are on the "tourist run" from Delhi. Agra has two first class hotels, Laurie's and the Imperial, and Jaipur has two or three, including the large and not expensive Rajasthan Government Hotel. Fatehpur Sikri is 20 miles from Agra and may be reached most easily by private taxi. Agra and Jaipur are provided with daily air and train services. The Government of India Tourist Department publishes numerous pamphlets on these places, and there are also private guidebooks published locally. Murray, however, is more than adequate.

AJANTA. See Ellora and Ajanta.

ANGKOR (Cambodia). The Angkor ruins are close by the small town of Siem Reap in north central Cambodia. There are daily air services by Royal Air Cambodge, Viet Nam Airways, and Thai Airways which connect Siem Reap with Bangkok and Pnom Penh, the Cambodian capital. Each of these flights lasts about one hour. Siem Reap can also be reached directly from Saigon. In the dry season (November-May) the roads from Bangkok and Pnom Penh are passable. The journey takes a full day, but if it is made in a private car, it eliminates the necessity of hiring a taxi in Siem Reap, which is an expensive undertaking. Taxis from Pnom Penh are also available, but it is cheaper to fly.

There are several hotels in Siem Reap of which the largest is the Grand. This is an expensive place, and the food is only adequate. The hotel has its own taxi service, but it is cheaper to hire a car or Landrover from outside. At the official rate of exchange in 1958, which was 35 riels to one American dollar, or 90 riels to £1, everything was extremely expensive. Henri Parmentier's guide, *Angkor*, for sale at the hotel, is confusing but contains useful maps and photographs. There are editions in French and English.

ANURADHAPURA (Ceylon). This town may be reached in about five hours or so by train from Kandy or Colombo. From Kandy, however, the most convenient service is by bus, even though the buses are not very comfortable.

At Anuradhapura there are two places to stay: the new government rest house, which is reputed to be both efficient and clean but which is in the center of the new town, and the Grand Hotel, which, although its name is misleading, has the benefit of being located near to the ruins. Taxis are available but are very expensive. A good way of going about is by bicycle; they are available for hiring through the hotels. The Government Tourist Bureau in Colombo publishes a small illustrated pamphlet on Anuradhapura, but Murray is more informative as a guide.

AYUDHYA (Thailand). This site, a former capital of Siam, sacked by the Burmese in the eighteenth century, is most easily reached in a taxi from Bangkok, which should not cost more than 200 ticals (\$10 or £3.10.0). The trip may easily be made in one day. The National Institute of Culture in Bangkok distributes free guidebooks for Ayudhya in Siamese and English. They are informative and nicely published.

BELUR. See Halebid and Belur.

BHUBANESHWAR, KONARAK, AND PURI (India). From Calcutta, Bhubaneswar may be reached by air or by overnight train. The Government Tourist Bureau can provide transport to Konarak and Puri by taxi, the day's trip costing about 100 rupees (\$20 or £7). There are also slow train and bus connections between Bhubaneswar and Puri. Konarak may be reached only by car or bullock cart.

At Bhubaneswar, which is the most convenient place to stay, there is an excellent State Guest House, and at Puri there is a government hotel on the beach. The Government of Orissa issues a good tourist handbook called *Visit Orissa*, available at the Tourist Office. There is also a separate pamphlet on Konarak. They are useful supplements to Murray.

BOROBUDUR AND PRAMBANAN (Java, Indonesia). The nearest town with accommodations to these sites is Djogjakarta. From the capital of Indonesia, Djakarta, there are daily trains to Djogjakarta, and in normal times there is also air service. In Djogjakarta the principal hotel is the Garuda, which is clean and adequately comfortable but which has only an indifferent restaurant. There are, however, various Chinese restaurants in the city of Djogjakarta. Taxis are available to the sites (Borobudur is 20 miles north; Prambanan 9 miles east), but they are expensive. The Ministry of Education publishes in English a useful pamphlet called "A Short Guide to the Borobudur and Lara Djonggrang Temples."

ELLORA AND AJANTA (India). The best center from which to visit these two sites is Aurangabad, which is most easily reached from Bombay by Indian Airlines. There is also a train service from Bombay and other cities as well as a passable road from Bombay. Aurangabad has an excellent government hotel, one of the best in all of India, and in the winter it is advisable to book in advance. Ellora is most conveniently visited by taxi, since it is only 18 miles away, and the trip costs approximately 35 rupees (\$7 or £2.10.0). Ajanta may also be reached by taxi, but since it is 50 miles away, the journey is expensive. There is a bus service, however, and buses especially call at the hotel for visitors. Although the journey is long and tiring, it is very much cheaper than going by taxi. The Ajanta caves can be seen in one day; those at Ellora require less time. In addition to Murray, there are pamphlets published by the Government of India Tourist Department which are available at the hotel.

FATEHPUR SIKRI. See Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, and Jaipur.

HALEBID AND BELUR (India). These two towns are most easily, if quite expensively, visited by private taxi from Mysore or Bangalore. There is also a train service from Bangalore and Mysore to Hassan, where one can stay at the somewhat primitive Dak bungalow. Taxis may be engaged here for 35 rupees (\$7 or £2.10.0) to visit Belur and Halebid, but there are also buses, which are much cheaper and more amusing, although their timetable is somewhat irregular. The Tourist Bureau in Mysore publishes a little pamphlet called "Halebid" which is illustrated and is a useful supplement to Murray.

ISFAHAN (Iran). By air from Tehran, Isfahan is about one and a half hours' journey. It may also be reached in a day by road. There are two reasonable hotels there, the Iran-tour and the more expensive Hotel Isfahan. Taxis to the various parts of the town are inexpensive. A new guidebook, *Historical Monuments of Isfahan*, written by L. Honarfar, the Director of the Archaeological Department of Isfahan, is the only decent one published and is very good.

JAIPUR. See Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, and Jaipur.

KANCHIPURAM. See Mahabalipuram and Kanchipuram.

KONARAK. See Bhubaneshwar, Konarak, and Puri.

LUXOR AND THEBES (Egypt). In the wintertime there is air service to Luxor and Aswan, but all year round there is rail service. The best train is the overnight one from Cairo, which has *wagon-lit* cars. There are three good hotels in Luxor, of which the largest, the Winter Palace, is closed during the summer. Near it is the Luxor Hotel, and on the Nile is the less expensive Savoy Hotel. The most satisfactory arrangements for visiting the ruins are those made by the hotels themselves, for private arrangements with taxi drivers can be misleading. The Luxor and Karnak temples are in Luxor itself, and Thebes lies across the Nile. It is necessary to go by taxi to see the various sites at Thebes, and the cost of a day across the river should not exceed two Egyptian pounds (\$5 or £1.15.0). In addition, however, the U.A.R. Government charges absurdly high entrance fees to the temples and tombs, some tickets costing as much as 40 piastres (approximately 75 cents or 5 shillings). So far as I know, the only guidebook to Egypt is

L'Egypte, published in French in the Guide Bleu series by Hachette in Paris. It is, of course, excellent.

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APPENDIX

MADURAI. See Tiruchirapalli and Madurai.

MAHABALIPURAM AND KANCHIPURAM (India). There is a bus service to each of these places from Madras and a train service to Kanchipuram, but the most efficient way of seeing both in one day is to hire a "baby" taxi at 6 annas a mile, which comes to about 50 rupees (\$10 or £3.10.0) for a whole day's excursion. Mahabalipuram is 37 miles away and Kanchipuram 50, but both are south of Madras. The taxis provided by government and private tourist agencies cost almost twice as much, and the "baby" taxis (which are usually Morris Minors) are quite adequate for the purpose. The Government of India Tourist Department distributes free pamphlets on both places, but Murray is sufficient.

PAGAN (Burma). Of all the sites in Asia, this is probably the most difficult to reach. Unless one has private connections which make it unnecessary to rely on public transport, one must go first to Mandalay and then come down the Irrawaddy by boat. There is a rest house at Pagan, but it is necessary to provide one's own bedding. It is also possible to drive to Pagan from Rangoon but the roads are in bad repair, and the journey is tiring. The Burmese Government has plans to institute an air service to Pagan and to build a tourist hotel. It is difficult to hire a taxi in Pagan, but horse carriages are available. "A Pictorial Guide to Pagan," which is just what it says it is, may be purchased in Rangoon. It is very useful and contains a map. Pagan is only mentioned in Murray's *Handbook*.

PERSEPOLIS (Iran). To visit Persepolis, which in modern Persian is called Takht-i-Jamshid, it is necessary first to go to Shiraz in southern Iran. From Tehran, Shiraz may be reached by planes of Iranair which stop on the way at Isfahan. It may also be reached by bus, a two days' journey. At Shiraz there are two European-style hotels, the Sa'adi and the more expensive Park Sa'adi. Taxis may be hired to visit Persepolis, which is about 40 miles distant, but it is necessary to engage in a good deal of discussion beforehand in order not to pay too ridiculous a price. At the site itself there is a hotel operated by the same people who run the Shiraz hotels, but it is expensive. Persepolis may easily be visited in one day from Shiraz. There is an excellent guidebook by Ali Sami which has been translated into English by the Anglican Vicar in Shiraz. It is most informative and scholarly and contains good illustrations and maps. It is for sale in Shiraz and at Persepolis.

POLONNARUWA (Ceylon). There is a bus service from Anuradhapura to Polonnaruwa, and there is also rail connection. A charming and well-run state rest house is available (book in advance) for visitors and is situated on the edge of a great artificial lake near the ruins. Taxis are available to visit the ruins; a bicycle is practical only for those near the rest house. Murray's *Handbook* is the only guide I know of, but the Government Tourist Bureau in Colombo probably has pamphlets.

PRAMBANAN. See Borobudur and Prambanan.

PURI. See Bhubaneswar, Konarak, and Puri.

SARNATH (India). This ancient site may easily be reached by taxi or cycle rickshaw from Banaras. Guidebooks are for sale at the museum, but Murray is adequate.

THEBES. See Luxor and Thebes.

TIRUCHIRAPALLI AND MADURAI (India). Tiruchirapalli (also known as Trichinopoly) is connected with Colombo and Madras by India Air Lines but may also be reached by train. Madurai presently has no air service but is accessible by rail.

The most convenient places to stay in each city, if coming by train, are the Railway Retiring Rooms, which are really station hotels. Both are well run, provide good food, and are inexpensive. Each city also has an English Club where foreign visitors may stay, but neither is convenient to the temples or to the centers of the cities.

The temples at Tiruchirapalli may most easily be reached by bus (inquire at the Retiring Rooms for the number of the bus; the bus stop is at the station), but there are also taxis. In Madurai the great temple is within walking distance of the station, and other places of interest may be reached by cycle rickshaw. Murray's *Handbook* provides all necessary information.



GLOSSARY

- Achaemenian: the dynasty established by Cyrus which ruled the Persian empire from 559 to 330 B.C.
- Ahriman: in the Zoroastrian religion, the leader of the powers of evil.
- Apsaras: in Vedic mythology, celestial nymphs. Apsaras are usually pictured as buxom girls in Buddhist and Hindu sculpture.
- Arjuna: in Hindu mythology, the warrior prince to whom Krishna (*q.v.*) delivered the famous sermon, the *Bhagavad-Gita*.
- Asoka: the great Indian king who united much of India, 267-232 B.C. He was converted to and became a zealous supporter of Buddhism. His capital was at Patna, and he is famous for the pillars and columns upon which were inscribed his decrees.
- aula: disc-shaped cupola of Hindu temples mainly found in Orissa.
- Auramazda: in Zoroastrian mythology, the leader of the powers of good in the world.
- bagh: a Moslem garden.
- batik: in Indonesia especially, a cotton fabric dyed in various colors by means of a process that uses wax for the inscription of patterns.
- bhogmandapam: the entrance building of a Hindu temple.
- Bodhisattva: a Buddhist who renounces Nirvana (*q.v.*) in order to help others attain it; also a Buddha who has not yet attained enlightenment.
- Brahma: in Vedic mythology, the senior of a triad of gods which includes Siva and Vishnu. He is the god of creation.
- Brahman: a Hindu priest; the highest of the Hindu castes.
- chaitya: a Buddhist shrine usually built in a shape similar to that of a Christian church.
- chintre: in Burma, a mythological dog which guards the entrance to a pagoda.
- dagoba: in Ceylon, the word used for a stupa or mound which contains sacred relics.
- darbar: in Moghul times in India, a public audience held by a ruling prince.

- Durga: the wife of the Hindu god Siva. She is a goddess of destruction and is also known as Kali, Annapurna, and Parvati.
- Ganesa: the elephant-headed son of the Hindu god Siva. He is the patron of literature and the god of wisdom.
- Garuda: in Vedic mythology, a fabulous half-human bird who serves as Vishnu's means of transport.
- Gheb: in Egyptian mythology, the father of Osiris. He was created by the scarab god Khepera.
- gopuram*: tall towers of the enclosing wall of late Hindu temples in south India.
- guru: a Hindu holy man and spiritual advisor.
- Hanuman: in the *Ramayana* (q.v.), the monkey general who assisted Sita to escape from Ravana by building a bridge between India and Ceylon.
- Horus: the son of the Egyptian god Osiris. He has the head of a falcon and is involved in many legends. He was the god of the daytime and also the avenger of his father's murder.
- htie*: the spire of a Buddhist stupa or pagoda, intended to represent the Buddha's umbrella.
- hypostyle: in Egyptian architecture, a many-pillared hall with a roof.
- Isis: the wife and sister of the Egyptian god Osiris. She is the mother symbol, and after Osiris was murdered by Set, she collected the pieces of his body and restored him to life.
- jagamohana*: the offerings building of a Hindu temple.
- Jain: an ancient Indian religion, still in existence, which flourished in the early centuries of the present era.
- Krishna: in Hindu mythology, an incarnation of Vishnu. As a boy, he was brought up among peasants and is renowned for his humorous exploits. He is usually painted blue and stands on a coiled snake playing a flute.
- kyat*: in Burma, a synonym for a rupee, a piece of money.
- Lakshmi: in Vedic mythology, the wife of Vishnu and goddess of wealth and beauty.
- Lanka: the historical name for Ceylon.
- lingam: the phallus of the Hindu god Siva. As a symbol of his role as the god of fertility, the lingam in the shape of a stone column appears frequently in Hindu temples dedicated to Siva.
- Maharshi: in Vedic mythology, one of the forms of Siva—as a guru or sage.
- maidan*: in Persia, an open square.
- mandapam*: a pavilion or porch of a Hindu temple.
- Mara: in Buddhism, the representation of carnal desire and evil.
- masjid*: a mosque. A *moti masjid* is a large mosque used especially on Fridays.
- Meenakshi: in Hindu mythology, the fish-eyed goddess, the wife of Siva. The name is used especially in Madurai, and Meenakshi is merely another name for Parvati or Durga.
- Meru (Mount Meru): the abode of the gods, a Hindu Olympus.
- minaret: the tower of a mosque.

moonstone: in Ceylon, a stone of half-moon shape found at the foot of stairways at Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. It represents the cosmos with symbols that are also found at the pillar of Asoka at Sarnath.

muczzin: a Moslem who calls the faithful to prayer at a mosque.

naga: in Vedic mythology, a snake god. A symbol for water, the *naga* is always pictured as a cobra.

Nandi: in Hindu India, the sacred bull who serves as Siva's vehicle.

natamandira: the audience building of a Hindu temple.

nats: in Burma, animistic deities worshipped before the coming of Buddhism.

Nirvana: in Buddhism, the release from desire that comes with death to those who have reached enlightenment. Roughly equivalent to the Christian heaven.

Osiris: the Egyptian god of the dead and also the god of fertility. He was the son of Gheb and Nout and the brother and husband of Isis. Murdered by his son Set, he was restored to life by Isis. The most important of the ancient Egyptian gods.

pagoda: a word used especially in China, Nepal, and Burma to describe a temple or stupa of the Buddhists.

Parvati: the wife of Siva; also known as Kali and Durga.

pokuna: in Ceylon, a sacred tank filled with water.

pylon: in Egyptian temples, a high wall built in the shape of a truncated pyramid through which an entrance is normally cut and which separates the temple courtyards from one another.

Rama: the seventh incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu. Rama is the hero of the *Ramayana* and usually carries a bow and arrow. He is considered the model for male behavior in India.

Ramayana: a compilation of the adventures of Rama, especially those concerning his wife Sita, who was kidnapped from him by Ravana, the king of Lanka. Only with the help of Hanuman, the monkey general, was she rescued. (See also Sita.)

rathas: in Hindu India, chariots; more especially the chariot temples at Mahabalipuram, near Madras.

Ravana: the villain of the *Ramayana* (q.v.). He was the king of Lanka (Ceylon) and kidnapped Rama's wife Sita.

Sinhalese: an adjective used to describe the majority of the inhabitants of Ceylon: those Ceylonese who are not Tamils.

Sita: the wife of Rama, whose adventures are told in the *Ramayana*. After her rescue from Lanka by Hanuman, she had to prove her chastity in an ordeal by fire. She succeeded but, even so, was banished by Rama for sixteen years.

Siva: one of the three great Hindu gods, the others being Brahma and Vishnu. He is god both of destruction and of fertility and is usually represented in the form of a lingam or phallus. He is the most widely worshipped of the Hindu gods.

stupa: a mound built to contain sacred relics of the Buddhists. Stupas vary in shape from country to country.

Tamil: a branch of the Dravidian race inhabiting southern India and also Ceylon. There is a separate Tamil language.

tank: in India, a rectangular pond built in connection with the Hindu temples. Tanks are baths for purification. In Ceylon, one of the large artificial reservoirs built 2,000 years ago in many parts of the country.

tjandi: in Indonesia, a complex of temples, or even one temple, either Buddhist or Hindu.

Vedas: part of the sacred writings of the Hindus. The Vedas consist largely of hymns of praise, texts for worship, and magic spells. The Upanishads, which are the more philosophical sections of the writings, are included in the Vedas.

vihara: a Buddhist monastery.

vimana: the tower and inner sanctuary of a Hindu temple.

Vishnu: one of the three great Hindu gods, the others being Brahma and Siva. He is the Preserver and has already appeared on earth in nine incarnations, the last of which took the form of Buddha.

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About the author

Educated at Harvard, Yale, and Oxford, FRANK MACSHANE has traveled widely and visited every continent in the world. The material for this book was gathered during a trip to Asia and the Middle East in 1958. At present he teaches English literature at the University of California in Berkeley.

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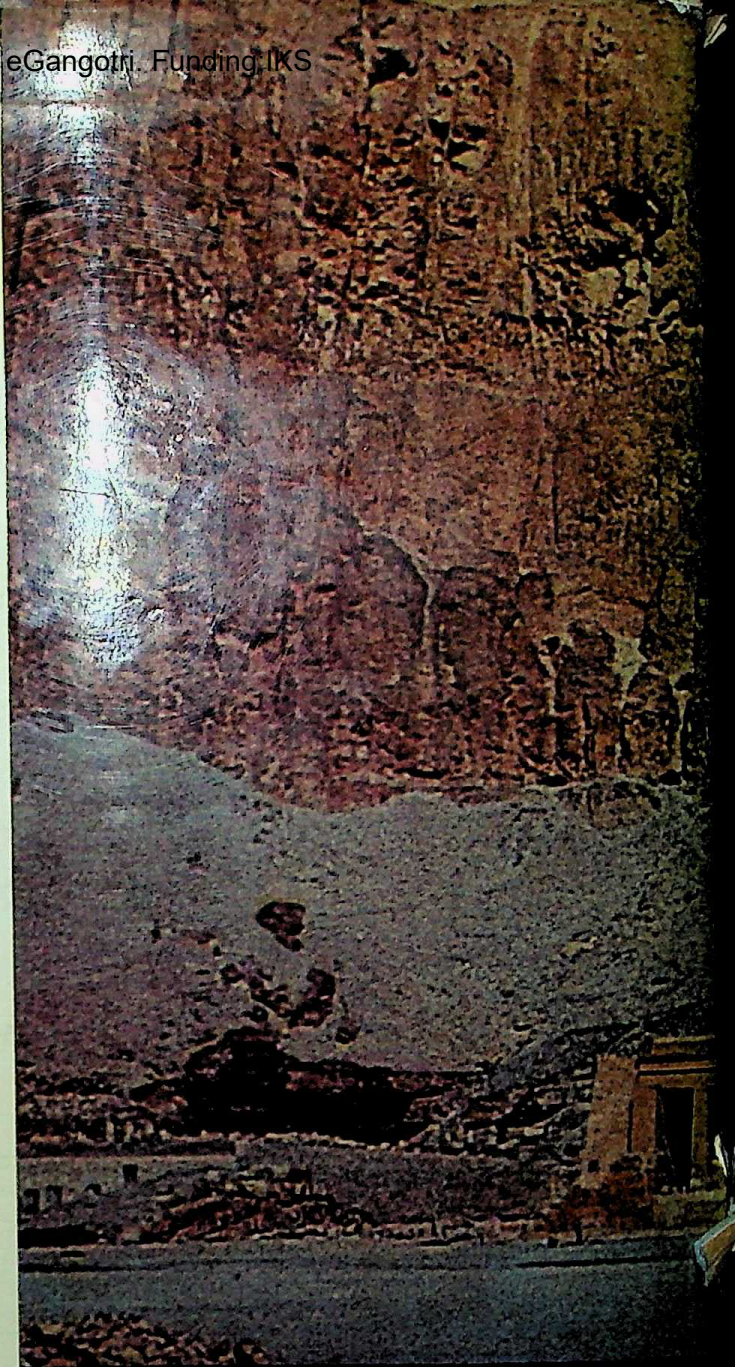
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